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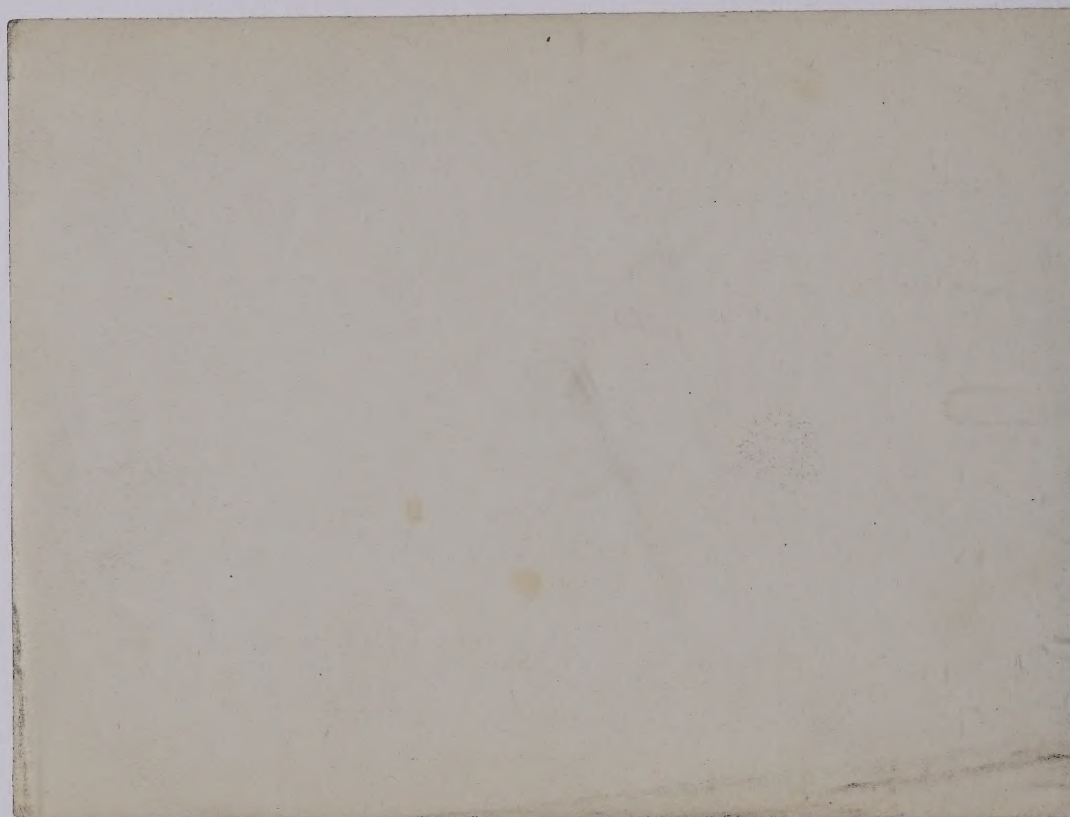
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George Whitaker



ORKNEY  
ISLANDS.

H. Scott Ship.

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N. RONALDSHA FIRTH

MAINLAND

PENTLAND FIRTH

PART OF CAITHNESS  
NORTH COAST OF SCOTLAND

Scale of English Miles 69 1/2 to a Degree



Geo. Whitaker

HISTORY  
OF THE  
ORKNEY ISLANDS.

INCLUDING  
A VIEW OF  
THE MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF THEIR ANCIENT AND MODERN INHABITANTS;  
THEIR MONUMENTS OF ANTIQUITY;  
THEIR NATURAL HISTORY, OR MINERAL, BOTANICAL, AND ANIMAL PRODUCTIONS:

THE PRESENT STATE OF  
THEIR AGRICULTURE; MANUFACTURES; FISHERIES; AND COMMERCE;  
AND THE MEANS OF THEIR IMPROVEMENT:

WITH A MAP OF THE ISLANDS, AND VIEWS OF REMARKABLE SCENERY.

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BY THE LATE REV. DR. BARRY,  
MINISTER OF SHAPINSHAY IN ORKNEY.

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THE SECOND EDITION,  
WITH CORRECTIONS AND ADDITIONS  
BY THE REV. JAMES HEADRICK.

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LONDON:  
PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, AND ORME, PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1808.



HISTORY

# ORKNEY ISLANDS.

A VIEW OF

THE HISTORY AND ANTIQUITIES OF THE ISLANDS AND TOWNS OF THE ORKNEY ARCHIPELAGO, WITH A DESCRIPTION OF THE NATURAL HISTORY, MINERAL, BOTANICAL, AND ZOOLOGICAL PRODUCTIONS.

THE FIRST PART OF  
THE HISTORY, FROM THE EARLIEST PERIODS TO THE PRESENT TIME, AND THE SECOND PART, OF THE ANTIQUITIES, AND THE REMAINS OF THE ANCIENTS.

WITH A VIEW OF THE ISLANDS AND TOWNS OF THE ARCHIPELAGO.

BY THE REV. JAMES H. BARRIE,  
MINISTER OF THE PARISH OF ST. ANDREW.

THE SECOND EDITION.

WITH CORRECTIONS AND ADDITIONS.

BY THE REV. JAMES H. BARRIE.



LONDON:

Strahan and Preston,  
Printers-Street, London.

1821.



TO  
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE  
*LORD DUNDAS.*

MY LORD,

THE HISTORY OF THE ORKNEY ISLANDS was lately published by my Father, under your Lordship's Patronage; and the Favourable Opinion you have been pleased to express of the Work, had my Father lived to enjoy it, would have added greatly to the Satisfaction derived from the Approbation of the Public.

A Second Edition being called for, may I request the Honour of dedicating it likewise to your Lordship.—I owe it to the Memory of my Father;—I owe it also to the personal Favours conferred on myself; and still more to the Feelings of a Family, happy in the Opportunity of thus publicly expressing their Gratitude to their Patron and Benefactor.

I have the Honour to be,

MY LORD,

Your Lordship's much obliged

And most obedient Servant,

JOHN BARRY.

Shapinshay,  
Dec. 10, 1807.







P R E F A C E  
TO THE  
S E C O N D   E D I T I O N.

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IN submitting this second Edition of Dr. Barry's History of the Orkney Islands to the public inspection, the Editor is aware, that, if he could offer an account of a *Terra australis incognita*, curiosity would be excited, and the book would be perused with avidity. He is aware that a cluster of Islands, which, with a fair wind, are only three or four days' sail from the capital of the Empire, cannot excite that interest from their novelty, which we would take in the description of places inhabited by savages; where volcanos vomited forth subterranean fires; where the traveller, at every step, encountered strange minerals, plants, and animals; and which could not be reached without the circumnavigation of the globe. In such cases, the difficulties surmounted, and the dangers incurred while obtaining information, render the adventures of the historian more interesting, than either the utility or importance of the information he conveys.

Although our author has kept out of view his own adventures, while employed in collecting the information he exhibits, we are not to suppose, that such a work could be drawn up in the closet, amidst the calm of learned retirement. Our Author must often have crossed the rapid sounds which intersect these Islands, where the tides run like torrents descending from the sides of mountains; and, when they encounter a strong wind, raise commotions which would appal any person but the native islanders. Often must he have grappled with the mountain billows of the Atlantic, and of the Northern Ocean, and, when he reached land, submitted to accommodations or rather privations, which would scare the inhabitants of districts more populous and better cultivated.—These circumstances, while they may be urged as an excuse for any defects that may appear in his work, ought  
also



also to enhance the value of the information he has obtained, and has communicated to the Public.

The favourable reception of the first Edition of this work by a discerning Public, evinces that there are persons among us, who consider a knowledge of the various districts of our own country, their natural and local resources, and the means of calling these into action, to be of the highest importance to the statesman, the political economist, the patriot, and every person who wishes to advance the glory and prosperity of his country. Our Author exhibits to our view a cluster of islands, scattered in the Northern Ocean, which, though in the direct tract of the immense commerce between the North and the South, had hitherto escaped the notice of our politicians as a constituent member of the British Empire. These Islands are inhabited by a brave and hardy race of men, who are a sort of amphibious animals, and are all addicted to a sea-faring life. Even the women navigate boats, through terrible seas, with the utmost skill and ability. The excellent harbours with which these Islands abound, render them of the highest importance, not only to merchantmen, but to the Royal Navy; as they command the navigation of the Northern Ocean. Neither is the soil unfruitful, nor the climate unpropitious for the production of grain and green crops; of flax, hemp, and the materials of fishing and navigation. The seas swarm with a vast variety of fishes, and often are the tables of our London epicures loaded with the delicious fishes which are caught upon their shores. It will be seen that these Islands furnish a greater proportion than the extent of their population, of brave and orderly seamen to the Royal Navy. They also furnish expert seamen to the whale fishery, to the Hudson's Bay Company, and to complete the crews of the numerous vessels which pass through their seas. Were their land only reduced into a tolerable state of cultivation, these Islands might become a greater vent for our manufactures, than any colonies, of equal extent, situated at the antipodes. This would encourage our coasting trade, which forms our best seamen, and who are always at hand to repel the dangers of their country. Were the fisheries also put in a train of improvement, it is impossible to calculate the amount to which the population of these Islands might be increased, or the invincible strength they would add to our naval power. Such suggestions are at all times



times worthy of the attention of those who manage our public affairs ; but they are of peculiar importance when the Northern Powers are dragged into hostility against us. In such a case the Orkneys would prove an excellent naval station ; and it would at all times be desirable to have docks and accommodations there for repairing any damage which ships might sustain, either from the seas, or from the enemy.

It will seem, however, that unfortunately, since their annexation to the Crown of Scotland, these Islands have not enjoyed so great a comparative degree of prosperity, as when they were under their own magnanimous Earls, and were the friends and allies, rather than the vassals, first of Norway, and afterwards of Denmark. In their ancient institutions we behold the rudiments of a free government, and of the British constitution. Their chief, though hereditary, and treated with profound respect, could neither make laws, nor engage in any important undertaking, without the consent of his Udalers, or Freeholders. It will be seen that these Islands formed the point of rendezvous of those piratical expeditions, which, during several centuries, carried havoc and dismay through the south of Europe. Their undisputed naval superiority enabled them, at all times, to choose their point of attack ; and their power was very formidable, when success in fighting did not depend so much on the numbers brought into the field, and the scientific tactics of their leaders ; as on the skill, the experience, and valour of individuals. It will be seen that Rollo, a son of an earl of Orkney, founded the Dukedom of Normandy in France ; and that a descendant of his, in the person of William the *Conqueror*, founded the dynasty of kings which still governs England ; and that from an Earl of Orkney our Gracious Sovereign derives his descent : who happily unites in his person the hereditary claims of all the sovereigns who ever swayed the sceptre in Scotland or in England. It will be seen that these Earls exercised a very extensive dominion, when compared with the dimensions and resources of the parent state ; that they were feared, and their forbearance often purchased by the greatest monarchs. It is hard to say how far their power and dominion might have been extended in times so favourable for their projects, had they kept the sovereignty indivisible, and shared among their children only property and effects. But the frequent division  
of



of their territories among their children, occasioned bloody contests among themselves about the right of succession ; and it was only when the whole principality was united under a daring and enterprising chief, that he could extend his views abroad, or engage in foreign expeditions.

But since the re-annexation of these Islands to the crown of Scotland, their progress has been retrograde, or, at least, they have become stationary, while other parts of the Empire were advancing in improvement. This may partly be ascribed to their distance from the seat of government ; the frequent minorities of our kings ; and the many interruptions of their plans for improving the fisheries, and promoting the prosperity of their subjects. The antient revenues which they furnished for supporting the dignity of their Earls, and carrying on their government, were removed, and expended at a distance ; and, in addition to these, the islanders were subjected to all the taxes imposed by the Scottish, and afterwards by the British Parliament. The antient revenues, being mostly paid in kind, operate as an invincible obstacle to the improvement of agriculture ; because it is not the interest of the cultivator to improve the quality of the corn, meal, malt, butter, and other articles he pays to his superior ; and he is only anxious to procure the requisite quantity, however inferior they may be in quality. Such payments also compel the cultivator to adhere to the antient system which was introduced at the commencement of agriculture, and operate as an effectual bar against his adopting an enlightened rotation of crops, with a suitable proportion of green crops and sown grasses. From the known patriotism of the Noble Lord who holds in property the rents of the Earldom of Orkney, it is to be hoped, that, were this matter properly represented to him, he would agree to accept of the annual market price of the various articles payable to him, to be ascertained by an impartial jury, in place of the *ipso corpora*. There can be no doubt but this commutation, while it unfettered the industry of the people, and relieved them from the domination of his satraps, would much increase his Lordship's fortune.

The awkward weights and measures now used in collecting these rents, should also be abolished, and their value reduced to known and permanent standards. The crown or bishop's lands should also be rendered private property, subject to a pecuniary conversion of the rents they now pay.



The next step is the division of commons; the abolition of run-rig, or mixed occupancy of the cultivators of the soil, and assigning to each a separate farm.—These obstacles have hitherto retarded the improvement of these Islands, and, unless they be removed, improvement is physically impossible. These first obstacles being removed, the subsequent steps of improvement are ably detailed by our Author, in the progress of his work.

In addition to what our Author has said upon the improvement of the fisheries, the Editor begs leave to refer to a work of his lately published, entitled a *View of the Island of Arran*, &c. wherein he points out arrangements which he conceives to be indispensably necessary for Government to adopt, as well as individual proprietors, or our fisheries must remain for ever in their present languishing condition, and the nation be deprived of the benefit of that population they are adapted to sustain; our naval greatness of that additional strength they are calculated to supply; and every class of our people of that command of commerce, and consequent wealth, of which the fisheries are the inexhaustible source. He would feel much diffidence if his ideas on this subject rested entirely upon his own observations; but he has taken advantage of the experience of his friend Captain Frazer, who has had much better opportunities of studying the subject, both theoretically and by laborious investigation, and whose ideas are sound, rational, and practical.

In a Note subjoined to p. 380. the Editor states, that other products, perhaps more valuable than alkaline salt, may be extracted from the marine fuci, or sea-weeds. He conceives that this assertion may require some explanation. Several years ago, when he was employed by the worthy Lord Seaforth, in exploring his Island of Lewis, having met with a contusion which rendered him incapable of doing his duty some time, he employed himself in making experiments on sea-weeds. He found that they contained the salts which are dissolved in sea-water; soluble mucilage, and a portion of ligneous fibres: but no particle of alkaline salts was he able to trace in them, unless the plants were previously subjected to combustion or to putrefaction. The mucilage was of two sorts, one of which dissolved in cold, and the other in warm water. He thought that a mucilage might



be extracted from these weeds, of two sorts, which might be of essential use in many of our manufactures.

But what he chiefly alludes to, is a bituminous substance he stumbled upon in these vegetables, which seems well adapted to supply the place of tar in the construction of ships. It is more nearly allied to Japan varnish, than to common tar, and therefore he gave it the name of *marine varnish*. As opportunity offered he made many experiments on this substance afterwards, and sent several specimens of it to that respectable Nobleman, Earl Spencer, then First Lord of the Admiralty. It appeared to abound most in those fuci, which were situated farthest towards the north; and, when he was last in Caithness, he passed over to Orkney, and devoted himself to the construction of an apparatus which might obviate all the errors he had formerly committed, and try the experiment on a large scale. But in a thinly inhabited country he could not get labourers, except when it suited their convenience, and the distant points from which he was obliged to collect his materials, occasioned such a loss of time, that the season was too far advanced, and the weather too bad, to admit of trying the experiment after his apparatus was constructed.

It is true we have public bodies whose professed object is to afford assistance to experiments which may increase the greatness, and promote the prosperity, of their country. But these are generally under such stupid management, that their only effect is to swell the ephemeral importance of those who direct them: and all wise and rational men endeavour to prevent their ignorance from doing harm, and think much is gained when they confine themselves to childish and frivolous pursuits; as they despair of seeing them instrumental in doing any good.

The result of burning the fuci the Editor found to be, the production of two species of alkaline salt,—potash and soda. The potash seemed to be owing to a combination of some principle in the atmosphere with the mucilaginous substance in the plant. The soda seemed to be produced from the decomposition, or some change effected upon the marine salt, which entered into the composition of the plant. He ascertained that the greater the heat, in contact with atmospheric air, the greater the quantity of alkaline salt produced from a given quantity of fuci; and that by a more scientific combustion



bustion of our sea-weeds, we might obtain alkaline salt equal, or superior in value to Spanish barilla, while we also obtained the other products alluded to, of great use in our manufactures, and in the construction of ships. All this he proposed to effect by methods which would lead a greater proportion of our population to live upon the sea; and thus they would be qualified to man those ships from which their previous labours had excluded the irruptions of water.

The scenery of these Islands surprises a stranger by its novelty. No hedges, few trees, but stunted bushes in different places, which constant cutting for making creels or baskets, prevents from attaining the size of trees. The islands are generally low and of smooth surface, and when seen from an eminence, with the intervening sounds and bays glancing in the sun-beams, they appear like smoothed lawns intersected by artificial ponds and canals; with this sole difference, that the wild beauties and majestic features of Nature, far surpass the puny efforts of human art.

In summer no darkness, or very long days with short intervals of night; at this season the setting and rising sun, when seen from an eminence, exhibits a spectacle of the most resplendent glory, which excites astonishment, but which baffles description. His orb, magnified to an enormous size by his oblique position, appears like a vast globe of liquid iron sinking into the ocean. Bright flashes of light are reflected from the bounding waves in the distant horizon, and resemble the commotion excited in water, when a vast mass of hot iron is plunged into it. Streams of various coloured light tinge the intervening sea; while the sky is occupied by golden rays, which fill more than a quadrant of the horizon. After the sun is down, the splendid blaze of golden rays appears to move round towards the north; and the sun soon rises again, to the east of north, with renovated glory and splendor.

It may be necessary to explain the views which have directed the Editor in preparing this second Edition for the press.—He is aware that the arrangement might have been improved; but it should be considered, that the Reverend Author was more solicitous about the collection of his materials than about their fastidious arrangement. That his work was not drawn up amidst the calm recesses of study, where method is expected,



even when the matter is not worth the trouble of methodizing; and that *materiam superabit opus*. He made no alterations but such as he supposed the author himself would have made, had he been alive. When he differed in opinion, or when he thought additional explanation necessary, it is generally subjoined as a note, to which the letter E. is annexed. In consequence of his distance from the press, he observes that a few typographical errors have crept in; but he is happy to find they do not materially affect the sense.

JAMES HEADRICK.

Dunichen by Forfar,

Nov. 1807.

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THE  
HISTORY  
OF THE  
ORKNEY ISLANDS.

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INTRODUCTION.

IN order that a more distinct and comprehensive view of these islands may be given, it is intended to look back to early times; and, by means of those feeble and scattered rays of light, furnished occasionally by ancient writers, to point out who were their first inhabitants; from what country it is probable they came; to what form of government they were subject; and what were their manners, their customs, their religion and laws, till towards the end of the ninth, or beginning of the tenth century, they became incorporated in the mass of their Scandinavian invaders.

The Scandinavians had about that time acquired, on their native lakes and shores, a high degree of renown, both on account of their military prowess, and of the colonies which they had sent out, not only into Orkney and Shetland, but also into the northern coasts of Britain, the Feroes, Iceland, and the Western Isles. Into whatever country they came, or whatever was their intention, to invade, to plunder, to conquer, or to procure settlements, they displayed the same military spirit which they had done at home; and, in Iceland, they added to this virtue a wisdom, which, among a barbarous people, has seldom been equalled, and never surpassed, in forming themselves into a regular republic, the laws and constitution of



which have been the admiration of the learned, and are as well authenticated as those of any state in ancient times.

That branch of the Scandinavians who conquered the first inhabitants of the Orkney Islands, and settled among them, shewed in their conduct the same intrepid spirit, the same love of glory and contempt of death, and all the other prominent and distinctive features, that marked the character of the colonies as well as that of the parent state. This will appear evident from the details that shall be given in delineating their character, as displayed in their military transactions and civil institutions; in their manners, their customs, their religious ceremonies and superstitions, several monuments of which they have left behind them.

From about the middle of the fifteenth century, when the Islands ceased to acknowledge a foreign master, and were ceded to the Scottish Crown (to which, on account of their vicinity, they should have always belonged), we shall naturally be led to consider the change in their condition which this new connexion produced. Here, instead of the improvement that might have been expected, we are compelled, however reluctantly, to regret the unhappy influence which the character, combined with the number and rapid succession of those whom their new Sovereign appointed as grantees, farmers, and rulers, appears but too evidently to have had, in repressing the genius of the people, damping the ardour of their spirit, and checking their industry in the arts of life.

After having thus taken a pretty extensive view of the Islands from the time they were first inhabited; stated facts, with the causes that led to them, and the consequences which they produced; drawn with fidelity the portraits of the principal actors; and traced the various changes which they have undergone, to that period when they were granted irredeemably to a subject, who soon afterwards sold them; our attention will be directed to their present state.

In this part of the plan, which we regard as of chief importance, the utmost pains shall be taken to state facts fairly, and place them in the clearest and most interesting point of view. In order that nothing of importance may be omitted, we shall give a sketch of their natural history, together with some account of their population, and the manners and customs, character



character and industry of the people by whom they are at present inhabited. As agriculture constitutes not only the first and most necessary, but the noblest of all the arts, it shall be, under this last division, treated of at considerable length, along with a brief account of their fisheries, their commerce, their manufactures, and particularly that of kelp, which for a long time past has been justly considered as their staple commodity. In the execution of this part of our subject, many practices will meet our approbation; some will merit censure; errors and defects shall be candidly pointed out, and ascribed to what appears to be their true causes; and such improvements suggested, as may, it is apprehended, contribute in some degree to the advantage of the empire at large, as well as to the internal prosperity of the Islands themselves.

But neither their ancient nor their present state can be understood accurately, unless a previous description be given of the whole of the islands that compose the group. Their surface, and general appearance, their temperature, soil and climate, must be stated, and the advantages of their situation accurately pointed out; the excellence of their harbours, capable at all times of receiving ships almost in any number, and of any size, together with the figure, dimensions, the relative situation and the productions of each, the improvements of which they are respectively susceptible, and the objects of curiosity which they contain, must all be exhibited in such a conspicuous point of light, that whoever attends to these particulars, may find no difficulty in thoroughly comprehending the subsequent part of the work.

If the history of these islands be thus considered, it will appear to be both important and extensive, and will naturally divide itself into three books.

BOOK I. will contain, besides a general view of all the islands that compose the cluster, a short geographical description of each, comprehending its respective productions, its figure, extent, and relative situation, its harbours, and such other objects as seem best calculated to gratify a laudable curiosity, or to serve the more important purposes of conveying useful information.



BOOK II. will comprise an account of the earliest inhabitants; whatever is most remarkable in their manners, customs, and institutions; the transactions and character of those people that conquered and mingled with, or succeeded them; a description of some remaining monuments of both these races of people; of the changes of the islands in subsequent ages, under different rulers, and of the influence these seem evidently to have had in retarding their improvement.

BOOK III. will exhibit the present state of these islands with respect to their mineral, vegetable and animal productions; their population, language, manners, customs; and the different species of industry that prevail at this time. Agriculture, in particular, on account of its importance, will occupy a considerable portion of this book; to which will naturally succeed, the consideration of manufactures, fisheries and commerce: the causes of their low state at present will be considered, and the means that might be employed for improving them to such a degree as could not fail to ameliorate the condition of the people, and at the same time contribute to the advantage of the State.



## BOOK I.

A VIEW OF THE ISLANDS, CONSIDERED AS A WHOLE, COMBINED WITH  
A GEOGRAPHICAL DESCRIPTION OF EACH.

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 CHAP. I.

SOME OBSERVATIONS THAT REGARD THE ISLANDS IN GENERAL.

THE islands that compose the group, known to the ancients by the name of ORCADES, and styled by the moderns ORKNEY, are situated in the Northern Ocean, between the coast of Caithness, and Shetland, from the former of which they are distant only about four, and from the latter nearly twenty leagues. From observations that have been taken with sufficient skill and accuracy, the latitude of Kirkwall, the centre, has been found to be fifty-nine degrees and nine minutes north, and the longitude two degrees and thirty minutes west, from the meridian of Greenwich. Their form, as may easily be conceived, is, from the force of the ocean, and the rapidity of the tides, extremely irregular; and, from this circumstance, the dimensions of some of them are ascertained with no small difficulty.

Of those that are inhabited, some are so small as not to exceed a mile in length; whereas the Mainland, or principal island, extends to nearly thirty. They are separated from one another by portions of water, denominated sounds, friths, or ferries, some of which are only a mile broad, and others more than five. Though thus closely connected together, the whole of them are of considerable extent; for, from the south-west to the north-east, the points farthest removed from each other, the distance is not less than seventy miles, and they are upwards of forty in the other direction.

Compared with the sterile wilds in some of the sister islands to the north, or even with the lofty hills and bleak marshy plains to the south of them, they



they gain so much, that their appearance is pleasantly inviting and favourable. To the eye, their surface presents much variety.

Great Britain itself is in a great measure level towards the east coast, through its whole extent, from the North-Foreland Head in Kent, to Duncansbay in Caithness, and rises gradually as it advances towards the west, till it swells at last into a ridge of hills or mountains, which Providence in its kindness seems to have erected as a bulwark against the fury of the Atlantic waves.

The same conformation, though comparatively on a very small scale indeed, is observable in the Orkney Islands. Many, to their sad experience, too well know how low their eastern coasts, especially toward the north, are; for this circumstance, more than any other, has caused many fatal shipwrecks.

Towards the west coast, on the other hand, from the one extremity of the islands to the other, the land is so elevated as, with a few interruptions, to form itself into a range of hills, not high indeed, but much more so than what are generally met with in the interior of the country. These hills, the highest of which does not exceed twelve hundred feet, do not always run in the longest direction of the islands, but frequently stretch across them; and while their sides that face the Western Ocean are bold and steep in the extreme, their opposite ones, for the most part, shelve away into plains of considerable extent, with a gentle declivity\*.

The shores in this quarter are in many places bounded by rocks awfully majestic. In some places they remain entire: in others they have yielded to the force of the billows and the ravages of time, and are consequently shattered into a thousand different shapes, altogether forming a scene highly interesting. To the philosopher, such a scene presents an opportunity of contemplating the different strata, and even sometimes of discovering some

\* The western elevation of these islands is owing to the position of the strata, which generally rise towards the west, or south-west, and dip, or are inclined, towards the east and north-east. We believe the late Dr. Walker was the first who observed that rocks, islands, and continents, were generally high towards the west, and sloped towards the east. Where the cause of this, as in the Orkneys, can be observed to be the particular position of the mineral strata, it seems to indicate a general conformity in the position of the strata throughout the globe. But the cause which produced this conformity of the strata, is wholly unknown.—E.



of those valuable minerals, which have been for ages hidden in the bosom of the earth, and would have been so for ever, had not the ocean brought them to light. If his soul be alive to the awful impressions of the sublime, he will be lost in astonishment in contemplating the tremendous power of the billows, that on one hand of him have formed pillars of an immense size, and thrown arches of a magnitude so vast, as to mock the boldest and most successful attempts of human art, and, on the other, dug in the solid rock, caverns so dark and unfathomable, as cannot fail to strike the most undaunted heart with terror. But however grand and sublime, or interesting, such objects may be, to either the intellect or the fancy, we must not bestow on them such a degree of attention, as to neglect taking notice of those hills that lye behind them.

Toward the south-west, where they are highest, with no great stretch of imagination they may be considered as a continuation of those in Strathnaver\*. As they advance along the ocean towards the north, they gradually diminish in point of size, till they sink as it were down into a plain, when they approach the northern extremity. This circumstance alone, though we had no other, might furnish some ground to conclude that these islands had, in some remote age, been joined with, and made a part of the continent of Great Britain. Several others concur to corroborate the same opinion. Separated from Caithness by a rapid frith of about twelve miles broad, in which several little islands are scattered, the shores on both sides, if examined accurately, will be found to contain many points of resemblance.

If, on the one side, the land be high, it is also often so on the other; the soil is sometimes the same on the opposite sides; the nature of the rocks,

\* Between the rocks on the west of Orkney, and those of Strathnaver, the first that are visible are those at Sandside, in the parish of Reay, Caithness. Nearest the sea, these are either calcareous sandstone, flag, or silicious schistus; in some places exhibiting veins or blotches of garnet rock. They also contain strata of dark blue limestone; veins of ponderous spar, in which masses of galena are interspersed; and exhibit many small strings and cubical crystals of galena, disseminated through the strata. These rocks are intercepted by low elevations of syenite, or red granite, behind which higher ridges of micaceous schistus, and of granite, occur. The other rocks towards Strathnaver have not been explored.

The western rocks of Orkney, facing those of Strathnaver, are mostly red, grey, and white sandstone, and may have been connected with the others by a regular gradation; though this is not very probable.—E.



and even their direction, and the angle they form with the horizon, are likewise similar: and the two high heads of Berey in Waas, and Dunnet in Caithness, which may be considered as the jaws of the Pentland Frith, have been observed to contain in them strata of evident similarity.

Should these and such like appearances be considered as having a tendency to prove their former junction with the continent, there are not wanting others to show, that probably in some remote period the Orkney Islands were united together, and formed one continued tract of land. Besides the arguments already adduced to prove their former connexion with the continent, the different islands exhibit on their opposite shores so many qualities in common, as can scarcely escape the most careless observer. To the eye, the land on each side of the water has the same appearance, whether wet or dry, high or low, green or heathy; the plants, whether marine or terrestrial, are very often of the same kind, as are also the clay, sand, shells and stones; and wherever they stretch out towards each other, and the distance between them is short, the water is frequently so extremely shallow, as to render the sailing between them, even for boats and small craft, attended with danger. If we attend to these circumstances, and allow them their due weight, even if we took no notice of others of the same nature that might be mentioned, we shall be led to conclude, that what are now so many islands, different in size, in figure, and in place, were once united to the continent and to one another. Neither are agents wanting, in nature, to produce this effect, which at first sight might seem to be extraordinary. The waters of the ocean, either acting by themselves in a gradual, slow, and imperceptible manner, or that element, in conjunction with fire hid in the bowels of the earth, generating between them air, and steam, or vapour, are abundantly sufficient for that purpose. Such agents have produced similar effects in many other instances\*.

To

\* There is much probability in the conjecture of our author, that the Orkney Islands were formerly joined to the main land of Scotland, and to each other. It is also very probable, that Caithness and the Orkneys were formerly much more extensive than they are now.

But to account for their separation, or the diminution of their superficial extent, there is no occasion to have recourse to subterraneous heat; as we see causes every day operating, fully adequate to produce the effects. In Caithness, where the strata are intersected by veins of soft matter, the



To the same causes, single or united, we ought perhaps to ascribe the existence of most of the islands that are to be found.

Great Britain herself, the principal one in the world, if not in extent, at least in point of industry, riches, glory, and felicity, bears on her southern extremity evident marks of having been once joined to her rival France. Sicily claims the same kindred with the opposite Italian shores; the Canary and Cape Verd islands have, it is probable, formerly made a part of Africa; and that infinite multitude of islands, which lye in the great Pacific Ocean, and which the nobly enterprising spirit of this age and nation has discovered not only to speak the same language, but to have many customs in common, have, it is likely, constituted one continued immense tract of land, which either subterraneous fires, earthquakes, or the ocean, or all of them united, have broken into those fragments that now appear.

Even continents themselves, which from their nature might be supposed

the sea has cut mines very far into the land; and is often seen rushing across headlands, through such mines, with terrible violence.

The *Old Man of Hoy*, though not mentioned by our author, affords an apposite illustration of the opinion we formed on the subject. This stupendous monument rises bold from the sea, west from the Wart, or Ward Hill of Hoy, the highest land in Orkney. It is several hundred yards distant from the rocks of Hoy; and, owing to the rise of the strata towards the west, is seen, from remote points of view, to overtop the high hills contiguous. Its elevation may be about 1,500 feet above the sea. It exhibits a perpendicular section of the sand-stone strata, built upon each other with all the regularity of masonry. In some aspects it resembles a rude pyramid, whose base has been narrowed by the waves; and threatens to crush you by its fall. In others it resembles the ruins of a vast cathedral, or of a turreted Gothic castle. In no aspect can it be contemplated without wonder and astonishment, mixed with pious veneration of that Being who constructed the universe.

The rocks opposite to the *Old Man* form a compartment, consisting of sand-stone, alternating with thick beds of clay, mostly of a red colour; and those towards the bottom, calcareous. It is well known that the latter strata cannot resist the vicissitudes of the weather, and much less the fury of the sea. That this compartment of softer strata formerly extended to the *Old Man*, and that the chasm has been scooped out by the sea, appears abundantly certain; and likewise that the *Old Man* is the fragment of another compartment, more hard, and capable of resisting the fury of the waves. In proof of this it may be mentioned, that towards the north of the *Old Man*, where the softer strata are not defended by his daring firmness, they are undermined below, and the consequent fall of the strata which rest upon them, has produced a spectacle of the most terrific ruins.

These stupendous effects have been produced by the mere impulse of the waves. But after the waves had formed a passage, so that the tide could ebb and flow from one sea to another, the rapidity of the currents would soon wash away all the soft minerals opposed to them, and widen their channel. Accordingly, no rocks are now seen in the Pentland Frith, or other sounds which intersect the Orkneys, exposed to the action of the currents, but what are endowed with great hardness, which qualifies them to resist their erosive power.—E.



more permanent, are not exempted from revolutions. In one quarter, the ocean is constantly beating down the land, wearing it away, and changing its appearance so much, that it can hardly be recognized. Sometimes it swallows up extensive tracts of land, and buries in sand spacious harbours, while at other times it has left its ancient bed, and opened up new countries to view. That this capricious element is constantly shifting place, and producing changes on the surface of this earth, cannot admit of a doubt, since on no other supposition can we account for the almost infinite number of shells, corals, beds of oysters, sea-fish entire and broken, which are so frequently found in places the most remote from the sea, even in the very bowels of the earth, and on the tops of high mountains. But to return.

The hills composing the ridge that skirts the western coast, as well as those that intersect the main land, and occupy some of the other islands, are seldom single and detached, but for the most part formed into ridges of some extent, with small intervening valleys; and their tops, instead of rising high into a conical form, are generally either flat or rounded. Some few of them are almost entirely covered with verdure; the bottoms of most of them consist of corn-fields, interspersed with patches of rich old grass, excellently fitted for the feeding of black cattle; the soil consists of sandy or clayey loam; their sides produce an excellent mixture of heath and grass, for sheep pasture, on a thin stratum of peat-moss, while their tops are usually brown, on a bottom of peat-moss, clay, or gravel. There are spots on some of them delightfully romantic, where the attention is arrested, and the ear pleased with the murmurs of the rills, and the eye feasts on flowers, that rear their heads and shed their fragrance amidst various kinds of shrubs.

But what is of much more consequence, Providence, ever bountiful in adding to the comfort of man, has with no sparing hand spread peat-moss over a considerable portion of these islands. From observations that have been made on this substance, as it occurs in different situations, it has been found to exhibit a very different appearance on elevated ground, from what it does on the plains. In low ground it is more black, more smooth, and of a much more coaly appearance. On the hills it is more soft and spongy, less disposed to adhere or unite into a mass, and of a much browner colour; the latter kind, when put on the hearth, kindles instantly into a blaze,



blaze, and is consumed with rapidity; the former catches the flame more slowly, but burns with more force, and for a much longer time. If peat-moss be a substance composed of matter derived from vegetables, such as those plants that are called musci or mosses, wood, heath, and others of a similar nature, in a certain stage of their putrefaction, this difference, which is no less striking than general, can be explained on rational principles. Heat and moisture, it is well known, are two of the most active agents in fermentation; and they have carried on that process much farther in the peat-moss in low, warm, and moist ground, than in places that are more cold and dry, on account of their superior elevation\*.

This substance, combined with clay or with sand, forms a soil here as common as any other, and universally known by the name of *YARPHA*, or bog soil, whose characteristic is a black colour connected with the power of retaining moisture, which has been supposed to account for the dampness prevalent in the country. As the islands, however, consist of hill and dale, high and low land, as well as of plains of considerable dimensions, they must, it is evident, in regard to soil, admit of much variety.

Accordingly, in those places that are most elevated, the *yarpha* soil is most frequent; in plains, that which is composed of sand more commonly predominates. In short, sand, clay and gravel, together with sandy loam, clayey loam, and gravelly loam, and the *yarpha* already mentioned, which is evidently composed of sand or clay, in union with a coaly matter derived from decayed vegetables, make up the list of soils combined together in an almost infinite variety of proportions, through the different districts of the same island, or in different islands.

\* The reverse of this is generally the case in the southern districts of Scotland. Mosses, in low, flat situations, generally yield a porous spongy peat, of a brown, or yellowish colour; while those on higher grounds yield a hard black peat. The reason is, that the first kind of mosses are generally in a growing state, while the latter have long ceased to grow, or to increase in bulk. When a moss has ceased to grow, it gradually assumes a coat of coarse herbaceous plants, beneath which the densest peat is always found. No putrefactive process goes on in mosses, unless it be excited by artificial means. The moss plants, by long maceration in water, are gradually reduced to a pulpy state; and the density of the peat is commonly proportioned to the length of time the plants have been subjected to that maceration. Perhaps some part of the effect may be owing to the species of the plants themselves. The *musci* are a very numerous tribe of plants, not yet sufficiently explored by botanists. Many of them are so small as to escape the naked eye.—E.



Various, however, as they are, they possess some qualities in common; for they are almost all of them thin or shallow, seldom more than one or two feet deep at most, resting on the solid rock, without any intervening strata; and, with a very few exceptions, they are uncommonly fertile. So much indeed is this the case, that, were the hand of industry directed to their cultivation with the same skill, and exerted with the same vigour that it is in other places, they would yield to few other parts of the kingdom in the production of several of the common sorts of grain, of almost all kinds of grasses, roots, and other valuable vegetables.

But to what causes are we to ascribe this fertility which so far exceeds expectation? The very rocks, perhaps, on which the soil rests, and which, on a superficial view, might appear to render it unfruitful, may by their nature contribute some way or other to an effect that is so beneficial. Some of these rocks are aluminous, or composed of clay, others are a kind of sand-stone, and both of them are frequently so soft and friable, as to break with the plough, and mix in small portions with the soil that covers them. In some few places, calcareous rock or limestone forms a bed for the soil, more hard, more solid, and far less liable to be broken into fragments: but whether any of these beds, or all of them, have any influence in rendering the soils they support more fertile, is a point not of very easy determination. They may perhaps part with a portion of their substance, to furnish those ingredients which render the soil productive; or perhaps they only prevent the rain from sinking below the roots of the plants, and at the same time collect the rays of the sun; and the heat and moisture thus produced by their means, may not only furnish and prepare food for the different plants, but even strengthen the powers of vegetation\*.

The climate of these islands, bad as it may be, has frequently been represented as worse than it is. To ascertain its real nature, so as to institute a comparison between it and that of other countries, a train of observations

\* A considerable extent of the solid strata of the Orkneys consists of calcareous sand-stone flag; and the lime-stone strata are only the same variety of rock, with a greater proportion of lime and of bitumen in their composition. The decomposition of these rocks leaves in the soil, or sub-soil, a portion of carbonate of lime, which occasions the fertility in question. This shews, that in estimating the value of primary soils, how important it is to ascertain the quality of the rocks on which they rest, and from whose decomposition they have been formed. — E.



must be formed, founded on an exact register of the weather, kept for a length of time by a skilful hand, with instruments constructed for the purpose, and placed in a convenient situation. As none such have yet been made, we are in a great measure ignorant on this point, except so far as we are guided by our own observation.

Many hundred years ago, it was observed that the south-west wind was more prevalent than any other in Great Britain. The same observation may with propriety be extended to this country; for the wind blows more frequently from that point of the compass than from any other, and at the same time with more violence; and, as it comes from the mountainous tract of the West Highlands, brings, as might be expected, not only the most frequent, but the heaviest rains, and also raises the tides through the whole shores to their greatest elevation. From the south-east, too, the winds are very frequent, and sometimes even stormy. In the spring, summer, and harvest months, while these winds prevail, the weather is sometimes dry and cold, sometimes damp, and not unfrequently thick, dark, and foggy; and when this last kind of weather continues for any time, it seldom fails to have a manifest effect in depressing the animal spirits, and generating colds, coughs, sore throats, and similar complaints that are the effects of such a state of the atmosphere. On the other hand, the north-west, north, and north-east winds, bring for the most part cold, dry, wholesome weather, and in the same degree that the others relax and sink, these brace and elevate the animal system. The east and west winds are neither remarkable for their strength, nor their long continuance, nor indeed are they marked with any striking peculiarity. Seldom do calms for any length of time prevail here; and the winds, from whatever quarter they blow, and in whatever season, are seldom or never tempestuous, but often loud and strong; and this circumstance has an evident tendency to render the climate salubrious.

Through the whole of the islands, rains fall in considerable quantity; but on the west coast, on account of its superior height, by far the greatest quantity falls. During the winter, when in other parts of the kingdom the land is locked up in frost, and deep buried in snow, rains more commonly prevail here, and are either so constant, or recur so soon, that they render it inconvenient to travel either by land or water; and, besides drenching the cultivated



vated fields, and hurting the roots of the grafs, introduce difeafes among fheep, horfes, and black cattle. From thefe and fome other effects that might be mentioned, as well as from fome recent attempts to obtain a meafurement, we have reafon to conclude that the annual quantity of rain that falls in thefe iflands amounts to twenty-fix inches at an average.

Snows are neither fo frequent, nor in fuch quantity; but they come with confiderable violence, and generally from the north-weft and fouth-eaft quarter of the heavens; and though what falls in the courfe of a year may not be much fhort of the quantity in other northern diftricts, it continues only a few days at a time on the furface of the earth, owing perhaps not only to the greater warmth, but alfo to the vapours that are constantly rifing from the fea and floating in the atmofphere. A peculiarity of the climate with refpect to the feafon of fnow and hail, merits fome attention. Some part of the month of June, which in Britain is well known to be of a pleafant and genial warmth, is here often not only colder than the preceding months, but almoft as much fo as any winter month. For about two weeks, and even fometimes more, about the middle of that month, the wind blows from the north, ftrong and piercing, accompanied with fnow and hail fhowers, which drive domeftic animals to feek fhelter; clothe the fields with a dreary afpect, by checking the progrefs of the young plants, and blafting their buds and their bloffoms, and to a ftranger would feem to threaten the iflands with famine. As foon as that period is paff, the wind veers round, warm fhowers fucceed, which revive the tender herbage, which now recovers its former bloom and verdure; the whole tribe of animals again rejoice, and the heart of the hufbandman is gladdened with the profpect of future plenty.

The caufe of this extreme and feemingly unnatural cold, evidently is the diffolving of the immense fields of ice in the Northern Ocean, which happens at that feafon, and the confequent evaporation.

About forty years ago, the north wind wafted over the ocean, what is ftill recollected by the old people, by the name of the black fnow, which at the time ftruck the inhabitants with terror and aftonifhment. Ever inclined to dread any uncommon appearance, which they have neither the capacity nor inclination to account for or explain, as portending fome calamity, the people



people were in the most painful perplexity in regard to the threatened disaster, when their fears were happily dispelled by an account of an eruption of Mount Hecla, from which, in all probability, this black snow proceeded. If the distance between Iceland and Orkney staggers the faith of any with respect to this matter, they should recollect what has been stated as a fact, that in some of the eruptions of *Ætna* or *Vesuvius*, the ashes have been carried by the winds to the plains of Egypt\*.

The climate presents to us another striking peculiarity. In most other countries, it is well known, thunder and lightning are, if not the effect, at least the attendant of warm weather in summer; and commonly the more hot and sultry that season happens in such places to be, they occur the more frequently. The reverse of all this happens here; for they very seldom are observed in summer, even in the hottest weather, but most commonly in winter, not indeed when the temperature is mild and the sky serene, but when the elements are in commotion: when it blows, rains, hails, or snows, thunder and lightning are frequently the consequence. To whatever cause we may ascribe their appearance at this season, it seems to have no influence in rendering them either more violent or destructive; they are less so here than in other places; they are not accompanied with hailstones of such vast magnitude; nor have they such a tremendous glare, nor such loud and awful peals.

Notwithstanding these irregularities, the climate possesses one quality superior to what is found in more favoured countries. As the islands stretch far to the north, it might have been expected they would have experienced all the inconveniences that arise from the extremities of heat and cold, that are felt under the same parallel in either the old or the new continent. This, however, is by no means the case; for, while the inhabitants of Hudson's Bay and Petersburg are alternately panting with heat, or shivering with cold, the inhabitants of the Orkneys enjoy a temperature comparatively mild and moderate. In proof of this, it may be observed that the medium heat, as appears by the springs, amounts to forty-five degrees; and the whole range, between the extremities of cold in winter and heat in

\* Buffon, *Hist Naturelle*.



summer, is from twenty-five to seventy-five degrees of Fahrenheit's thermometer. The range of the barometer is three inches. Hence, the few epidemical disorders which occur as the consequence of extremities of temperature, the good health and vigour, which the people often enjoy to an advanced age, and the instances that we sometimes meet with of longevity. There are none of those diseases that are called endemical.

Thus, besides much variety and considerable extent of surface, an excellent soil, capable by due cultivation of furnishing abundance, and a climate by no means very unfavourable, the islands possess other advantages that result from their nature and circumstances. We shall finish this general account with a short notice of the conveniences which they possess for naval accommodation.

Around their whole coasts, the land, with a few exceptions, may be descried at the distance of ten leagues, where the water is in depth fifty-two fathoms. So near the west shore as one league, the depth of water is between forty and fifty fathoms; but on the opposite side of the group, at the same distance from land, the depth of the water does not exceed thirty-two fathoms.

The flood-tide, in most places, comes from the north-west, and, when no obstacles from land, rocks, or shallows intervene, directs its course to the east, south-east or south, according as it is new made, half run, or approaching to still water.

At full and new moon, it is high water about half an hour after nine, when the ordinary spring-tides rise eight feet perpendicularly, and the extraordinary ones fourteen; and at the quadratures, the usual neap-tides rise three and a half, and such as are uncommon above six feet in height.

The greatest rapidity of the spring-tides, even in those channels where they run quickest, is nine miles in an hour, and the neap-tides have only about a fourth part of that velocity.

If these spring-tides be either at their greatest height, or their lowest, the water continues still for the space of only half an hour; and if the neap-tides, it remains one hour and an half.

From whatever quarter ships come, there is almost at all times an easy and ready access to such as are acquainted with the proper channels; and



as soon as they have got within the precincts, however stormy the weather may be, or however shattered their condition, little or no difficulty will arise to their finding an excellent harbour. For one part of the year, the night is nearly as fit as the day for entering the harbours; for so far do the islands extend to the north, and such is the effect of having no land immediately beyond them, that the twilight is in general so bright for two months in the summer, as to enable a person, with the ordinary powers of vision, to read in the house at midnight with the utmost facility. Neither does the darkness even at other seasons, either much retard or endanger the entrance of ships, or their sailing among these islands; for the moon, from the reflection of the water, shines with such an uncommon degree of splendour, that not only the little islands, but even the rocks and tides are almost as conspicuous in the night as in the day. But even in the long nights, and when the moon does not shine, light from a different source seasonably rises to facilitate navigation, by dispelling the darkness that would otherwise overspread our coasts.

This is the Aurora Borealis, now very improperly denominated the Northern Lights, since, by late discoveries, they have been found to belong equally to both hemispheres. Here they happily appear, both more frequently and with greater splendour, than in most other regions; for during the harvest, winter, and spring months, they arise almost every unclouded night, and often shine with the most magnificent brilliancy.

The light of the moon at her quadratures, sometimes, on such occasions, scarcely equals them in illuminating the friths and the islands.

Between the setting of the sun and the close of the twilight, they commonly make their first appearance in the north, issuing for the most part from behind the clouds, like a fountain of pale light, the form of which is undefined, and continue in this state a little above the horizon, sometimes only for a short period, and at other times for the space of several hours, without any motion that can be discovered. They form themselves one while into an arch, the height of which is about thirty degrees, and its breadth about sixty; and the pillars on which it is supported several times broader than the rainbow; and so long as they retain this shape, they are without any sensible motion. At another time, they extend farther over



the heavens, rise much higher, assume a greater variety of shapes, and discover a dusky hue, with a motion that is slow, but perceptible. Very often they exhibit an appearance quite different, and spread themselves over the whole heavens, diffusing every where a surprising degree of light, and exhibiting the most beautiful phenomenon.

Their motion, in this case, is in various directions, extremely swift, and as it were in separate columns, resembling somewhat the evolutions of a great army. Their lowest extremities are distinctly defined, and deeply tinged with the colours of the rainbow; but their upper ones are tapering and fainter. In several places at once, they kindle into a blaze, dart along in almost all directions, for some seconds at a time, and then, as if by the strength of their exertions they had spent their force, they are extinguished in a moment, leaving a brown track in the sky behind them. Near the place where they disappeared, in a short time they flash out anew, and with equal rapidity trace the same path in similar motions, and again expire in the same manner. Thus they often continue for several hours together, to the great satisfaction and amusement of the spectators on land, and advantage of the mariner, when they gradually die away, and leave through the whole heavens a colour resembling that of brass. If the night be uncommonly still, and their motions very rapid, a whizzing noise has been thought to have been distinctly heard from them at various intervals. This beautiful corruscation, which has never yet been satisfactorily explained, is said to have appeared much seldomer eighty or ninety years ago, than it does at present. It appears now, however, very often, and seems to occupy that space in the heavens which is between the region of the clouds and the summit of the atmosphere, as the clouds in motion never fail to eclipse it; and as it cannot be seen from two places greatly distant from one another at once, nor yet in conjunction with the same fixed stars, it evidently has no great degree of elevation.



## CHAP. II.

## A GEOGRAPHICAL DESCRIPTION OF THE ISLANDS.

THOUGH many of the ancients mention this country, there is good reason to believe that their knowledge of it was very limited; either from not having bestowed on it the degree of attention necessary, or from having drawn their information from an erroneous source. The truth of this observation will readily gain credit, if it be considered that they differed widely in opinion, not only with regard to what, in its own nature, was more intricate, but even concerning the very number of the islands, which was not a point certainly very difficult to ascertain. While some of them reckoned the number only three, others extended it to forty, and others thought it more consistent with truth to state them at some of the intermediate numbers\*.

Depending on no such vague authority, our information is drawn from an actual survey, made half a century ago, with much skill and accuracy, and since confirmed by repeated observations †. According to this survey,

\* The sole or the principal authors among the ancients who have mentioned these islands, follow:

| A. D.                                                      | No. |
|------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 45. Pomponius Mela, lib. 3. c. 6. who reckons them         | 30  |
| 77. Pliny, lib. 4. c. 16. who states them at no fewer than | 40  |
| 84. Juvenal, who makes no mention of their number.         |     |
| 97. Tacitus.                                               |     |
| 140. Ptolemy                                               | 30  |
| 116. Suetonius.                                            |     |
| 240. Solinus, who reckons them only at                     | 3   |
| 306. Eutropius.                                            |     |
| 397. Claudian.                                             |     |
| 416. Orosius                                               | 33  |
| 552. Tornandes, Goth. c. 1.                                | 34  |
| 406. Itinerarium Antonini.                                 |     |
| 657. Isidorus, lib. 14. c. 6.                              | 33  |

† Mr. Murdo MacKenzie, a native of this place, who being well acquainted with mathematical science, undertook a nautical survey about 1750, which he completed to the entire satisfaction of naval people, who, in a matter of this kind, are the only competent judges.



their number amounts to no fewer than sixty-seven, twenty-nine of which only are inhabited; and the remaining thirty-eight, which in the primitive language of the country have been denominated Holms, are much inferior in point of size, and have always been appropriated to pasturage. Besides all these, there are several which are overflowed at high water, and have scarcely any soil for the production of vegetables; on these, land animals can with difficulty subsist: these, in the same language, are called *Skerries*, a name which indicates sharp, ragged rocks. Even in these, however, insignificant as they may appear, temporary huts are sometimes erected in the summer season, on purpose to accommodate a few people employed in cutting, collecting, drying and burning the marine plants for the kelp manufacture. The Holms are at that season frequently occupied in the same manner, for the same beneficial purpose. As the grass on the latter seems to be very fine, and is at the same time luxuriant, both the sheep and cattle that feed on them soon acquire an uncommon degree of fatness. But there is something either in the nature of the plants which they produce, occasioned by their being frequently drenched by the salt water, or in the animals sometimes feeding on sea-weed, that renders their flesh less pleasant than that of others fed in different circumstances. Situated for the most part near the larger islands, from which they appear to have been torn, both the Holms and *Skerries* belong generally to those proprietors whose lands are not the nearest, but divided from them by the shallowest water.

Excellent are the haunts they form for several kinds of amphibious animals. To them the seal, and the otter in particular, very often resort in hot weather; where, stretching themselves at full length on the rocks, they bask in the sun's rays, for many hours at a time, with the utmost apparent satisfaction. They are joined in this sequestered abode by various kinds of sea-fowls, both native and migratory, which repair thither in the proper season, with a view to build their nests and rear their young unmolested.

The other islands, which have been already mentioned as amounting to twenty-nine in number, are in general of a much larger size, and all inhabited, some of them better, and others worse; but all of them possessing a population much inferior to what it might be, were that degree of cultivation bestowed which would richly reward the hand of industry.

The



The names they severally bear, though at first sight they may seem to be whimsical and arbitrary, are perhaps derived some of them from their form and appearance, some from their soil, their size or their situation, and some from places on the continent from which the inhabitants from time to time migrated, and where it may be easily conceived they left behind them many objects of their affection.

Not only Norway, but even Iceland, contain places of the same name with some of those that distinguish these islands; and, what may justly excite more surprise, several of the Hæbudæ, or Western islands, have the same names also, which perhaps they have obtained when occupied by the same people, or when under the dominion of the ancient Counts of Orkney\*.

To the slightest observation it will appear, that the names of most of the islands terminate in *a*, *ay*, or *ey*, all of which, in the different dialects of the Gothic language, (of which that formerly spoken here was unquestionably one), signify an island of a large extent, as Holm implies one that is smaller, and only fit for pasturage†.

From time immemorial, and indeed perhaps since they were first inhabited, they have been divided into north and south isles, on account of their situation, with respect either to the mainland, or, more probably, to Kirk-wall, which for many ages past at least has been considered as their capital. Following this division, we shall begin with the principal island, which, on account of its importance in several respects, justly merits the preference.

\* D. Monro, Dean of the Isles, MS. Adv. Lib. Edinburgh.—The names which the inhabited islands at present bear, together with the same as mentioned by × Buchanan and † Torfæus, follow. Pentland Skerry. Swanay, × Suna, † Sviney. Waes, × Valis. † Kalfey. Flotay, † Flota. Faray, † Fara. Cava. Riffa. Hoy, × Hoja, † Haey. Græmfay, × Gramsa, † Grimsey. S. Ronaldsfay, × Ranaldsa, † Rouvaldsfay. Burray, × Burra, † Borgar. Lambholm. Copinsfay, × Cobesa, † Kolbensfey. Mainland, × Pomona, † Pomona. Damsfay, × Damsfey, † Damsfey in finu Uridasfiordo. Shapinsfay, × Siapinsa. Gairfay, × Gersa, † Gareksfey. Weir, × Vira, † Foeroe. Inhallow or Enhallow, † Eyinhalga. Stronfay, × Stronsa, † Strionsfey. Papay-Stronfay. Eday, † Eidoe. N. Faray, × Fara, † Fridarey. Sanday, † Sandey. N. Ronaldsfay, † Ronardfey. Westray, × Vestra, Vesturey. Papay-Westray, × Papa, † Papey or Papley. Egilsfay, × Eglisa, † Eglisfey. Rusa, × Rusa, † Rolfsey.

Those without any mark before them are mentioned by neither of these authors.

† Ihre, Glos. Suigoth.



I. The ingenuity of etymologists has been exercised, to account for the origin of the names of the MAINLAND, or POMONA. The latter appellation has been traced, ridiculously enough, to a word in the Roman language, that implies the core or heart of an apple, in allusion to the situation of this with regard to the rest of the islands. Two British words, *pou*, *mon*, *parva patria*, or small country, have also been assigned as the origin of this name; and the authors who have espoused these different opinions, have supported them with a warmth far beyond the importance of the point to be ascertained. The former has also been traced to different sources, the most probable of which is two Icelandic words that signify Greatland; and this name is very applicable, if a comparison be made between it and the other islands. But whatever may have been the origin of these names, they have either been considered as of little moment, or involved in obscurity, since the ingenious historian, \* to whom we are indebted for much of our information respecting the ancient state of this country, though he has attempted an explanation of the names of some of the rest, has past in silence that in question, though an island of much greater consequence.

From east to west, its longest direction, it extends not less than thirty English miles, and through that space discovers, in point of appearance, soil, culture and elevation, a very considerable degree of variety.

A ridge of hills, of no great height, rises towards its eastern extremity, which stretches westward along the north side of the parish of Holm, suffers an interruption at the bay of Scalpa, is continued again through a considerable part of the parish of Orphir, (where the direction is suddenly changed toward the north at nearly a right angle), and extends through the parishes of Frith and Rendal, six miles distant from, and in a line nearly parallel to, the hills of Stromness and Sandwick, the western boundaries of the island.

Through this whole extensive tract, the hills are generally green on the sides, many parts of which are very productive when cultivated; and the tops are covered with such an excellent mixture of various sorts of grass and

\* Torfæus.









*Drawn by Wm. Smith.*

*Engr. by J. W. Smith.*

# *View of Kirkwall from the West.*

*Published by Longman, Hurst, Ross, & Orme, Paternoster Row, Oct. 23. 1807.*



heath, as affords almost constantly a secure haunt for multitudes of moor-fowl, as well as pasture for sheep and black cattle, and horses. Its breadth is by no means so considerable; for though it reaches nearly sixteen miles on the west side, the east does not extend above five or six; and near the middle it is so narrow, as to form a neck of land, which comprehends little more than a mile in length, dividing the island into two peninsulas. The spacious and beautiful bay of Scalpa bounds the one side of this isthmus, and the bay of Kirkwall the other; and the ground that lies between them is at once so flat, so damp, and, in other respects, of such a nature, as to render it probable that the sea some time or other has occupied the whole space between them. The ancient town of Kirkwall stands on the north side of this tract of land, towards the south-east side of the bay of the same name; and by a little rivulet which runs through the middle of the town, (over which a stone bridge of one arch has been built, for the convenience of the inhabitants), is divided into the old town, that bends along the bay, and the new that stretches a considerable way to the southward.

The country parish, in the middle of which the town stands, is named St. Ola, which, before the cathedral of St. Magnus became the ordinary place of worship, or even perhaps before its foundation, had a church appropriated to it, which it is well known stood near the shore of the road or bay of Kirkwall. Around its site many of the houses yet standing bear such evident marks of antiquity, that no doubt can be entertained of their very early erection; and these perhaps were some of the very houses that, from their situation, had conferred on them, as we learn from ancient authorities\*, the name of Kirkiovog, or the kirk on the bay, a name afterwards corrupted or converted into Kirkwall. The town has only one street, nearly a mile long, with many excellent houses ranged on each side of it, which, both for the style in which some of them are built, and the manner in which they are finished and furnished, (to say nothing of the neat little gardens that are annexed to them), may bear a comparison with those of any small town in the kingdom. Several of the gentlemen of property reside here, and a considerable number of shopkeepers; but the body

\* Torfaus. Orkneinga-Saga, &c.



of the people is composed of tradesmen, boatmen, servants, and day-labourers: and when the population of the country parish, which makes a fourth of the whole, is considered, the united parishes of Kirkwall and St. Ola, in which there are two established clergymen, contain, the former about two thousand, and the latter five hundred inhabitants. Even in very old times it appears to have been a place of no small consequence; but the nature of its constitution, and the extent of its immunities and privileges, as enjoyed under a foreign government, we are in a great measure unacquainted with, for want of such documents as might serve for our instruction. Its being a place of much note, gives us reason for believing they must have been more than ordinary; and whatever they were, they were all, soon after the cession of the islands, confirmed to it by a charter from the Scottish Sovereign, erecting it into a royal burgh, which was corroborated by two succeeding monarchs; and the whole rights and advantages it conveyed were at last solemnly ratified by an act of Parliament. The government is in the hands of a Provost, four Magistrates, a Dean of Guild, Treasurer, and fifteen other members, which together compose a Council, that meets at Michaelmas every year for the purpose of alternately electing and being elected, and at other times to collect and dispense the public funds, and transact the other branches of business of the community. Kirkwall, with the four northern burghs, Wick, Dornoch, Tain, and Dingwall, choose a burghess to represent them in the British Parliament. In this town, the Sheriff, the Admiral, the Commissary, and Justice of Peace Courts, are also occasionally convened for the administration of justice; and for the cognizance and regulation of ecclesiastical matters, the three Presbyteries of which the provincial synod is composed, and also the synod itself, meet at least once a year, or oftener, according to circumstances. Here is also a custom-house and post-office, and a store-house, into which are collected the rents, that are mostly paid in kind, of both the bishoprick and earldom, which are generally let in lease to merchants, who sometimes dispose of them here, sometimes send them out of the country.

There are also in it public buildings. Among these may be reckoned the town-house, supported on pillars, forming a piazza in front, and in every respect a neat and commodious building, the first story of which is divided into



into apartments for a common prison, the second for an assembly-hall, with a large room adjoining for the courts of justice; and the highest is set apart as a lodge for the accommodation of the ancient fraternity of free-masons. To the west of this, and at no great distance, are the school-houses, in which are taught the several branches of English education, Greek, Latin, and Mathematics. These, however, are trifling, compared with the relics of the Bishop and Earl's palaces, the castle, once a place of great strength, and at their head that venerable pile the cathedral of St. Magnus. For nothing, however, is it more celebrated than for its excellent harbour, broad, safe and capacious, with a bottom of clay so firm, and a depth of water so convenient, as to afford anchorage for ships of a large size, and in great numbers.

Towards its south-east side, there are still to be seen the vestiges of a very rude temporary fort thrown up on the spur of the occasion by Oliver Cromwell; and on the opposite side of the bay another of the same kind has evidently been marked out, in order that they might co-operate in either annoying or protecting the harbour.

Most of the lands in the parish of St. Ola, that lye around Kirkwall, formerly made a part of the temporality of the bishopric of Orkney, and were feued either at the Reformation, or on the prospect of the abolition of Episcopacy. Some of them belonged also to the prebendaries of St. Peter, &c.

As the soil in many parts of them is good, such as have fallen into private hands have been partly enclosed and cultivated; but those that have been granted to the town, on condition, it is said, of their supporting the cathedral of St. Magnus, and are still in the hands of the community, remain, from various causes, in the same rude and uncultivated state as before, though equally susceptible of improvement. A very great proportion of them is still an undivided common, belonging jointly to the town and private gentlemen, all of which almost is capable of substantial melioration; and if ever agriculture flourish here, that land will not only serve to increase the revenue of individuals, and augment the town's funds, but also furnish more ample provision for the inhabitants.



The Bay of Inganefs, on the eastern extremity of this parish, is so well sheltered from the west wind, which here is commonly the most violent, and so commodious in other respects, that some seafaring men of reputation prefer it as a harbour even to the road of Kirkwall.

Toward the east, it is bounded by the united parishes of St. Andrew's and Deernefs, that consist of an extensive tract of plain ground, some part of which is tolerably well cultivated. They reach in that quarter to the farthest part of the main land. To these parishes a road was made many years ago, on which has been erected a stone bridge, consisting of two arches, over a dangerous rivulet; and these improvements, however trifling they may appear, by facilitating the communication with Kirkwall, have already had some influence on their condition. The name of the one parish seems to be derived from the tutelar saint of Scotland, to whom the church is dedicated, and that of the other from the deers, which, tradition says, formerly frequented this peninsula, in which at that time stood a forest, that rendered it a fit habitation for them. In support of this tradition, it may be observed, that in a peat-moss here, deers' horns are said to have been found deep buried in the earth, the roots of trees dug up, and hazel nuts in numbers discovered, to all appearance entire, but totally without kernels\*.

In support of this opinion, we are told, that in a deluge of rain and consequent inundation, the roots of these trees were extremely moistened and loosened in the earth, to which a violent storm of wind succeeding, the whole was shattered, broken, overturned, and consigned to destruction †. To compensate for the loss thus sustained, a gold mine is said to have been discovered here about the beginning of the sixteenth century, which was soon deserted through fear and superstition ‡.

Near the very top of the Mull, (which signifies a promontory) §, and the boundary of the mainland to the north-east, a chapel had been reared in the dark ages, the access to which is equally difficult and dangerous; and this circumstance, perhaps, no less than other motives, might have contributed

\* Bleau's Atlas. Wallace, Description of the Orkney Islands.

† Ben. MS. Adv. Lib. Edinburgh.

‡ Ben. MS. Adv. Lib. Edinburgh. § Ihre, Glof. Suigoth.



to render it a place of devout pilgrimage, into which the people took great delight frequently to scramble, in order to perform their vows, and leave their superstitious oblations. For some time past they have begun to see the folly of a practice so repugnant to the spirit of rational religion.

This parish of Deerness forms a peninsula, which, from the Mull-head of Deerness to the isthmus that divides it from the other, is in length upwards of four miles, and varies in breadth from one to three, chiefly on account of the large and beautifully winding harbour of Deer sound. This harbour, which separates the parishes from one another, is nearly in the direction of N. E. and S. W., four miles long, from one to two and a half broad. Its entrance is from the north; and as it is surrounded with land on every side, has a bottom of clay mixed with sand, and a sufficient depth of water, it cannot fail to be an excellent harbour.

The population of these parishes does not at present exceed fourteen hundred.

Turning from them toward the south, a large tract of high land presents itself, of a yarpha or deep peat soil, mostly covered with heath, and crowded with moorfowl, on the south side of which lies the parish of Holm, spreading at great length along the pleasantly winding Holm sound.

From east to west this parish is in length near five miles, and in breadth not above one. It was formerly divided into two, with the names of Holm and Paplay. The division on the west had probably the first name given it, from a little island in the sound called Lambholm or Lamon; and the eastern district as probably derived the name it bore from the people who at a very early period inhabited that fertile and beautiful district. They have long been united under their present name, and form one of the most compact and prosperous parishes in the country. Through its whole extent the soil is thin and stony, composed of a mixture of clay and sandy loam; but as most of the cultivated land lies on a gentle declivity fronting the south, and is at the same time better improved than other parts, their crops are not unfrequently better than those of their neighbours. Their houses are well built, clean, and neat; their little gardens in good order; and, besides raising bear and oats, one sees with pleasure little patches of their farms enclosed, where they have some of the artificial grasses in much perfection.



Flax, also, for many years past, has been raised with effect in this parish by the ordinary farmers, who, in the winter season, or other intervals of agricultural labour, prepare and dress it, when the females of the family spin it to be manufactured into linen, of a *grist* or fineness between nine and eighteen hundred, which is commonly sold at the English market for a good price, to the amount of twenty thousand yards annually.

Notwithstanding the comfortable condition of these people, their numbers have decreased since the survey was taken for establishing the fund in Scotland for the ministers' widows; for at that time, or about ten years afterwards, they amounted to eleven hundred and eighty-five, whereas now they cannot be said to exceed seven hundred. The valued rent of the parish is two thousand three hundred and sixty-five pounds Scots, besides fractions, and the real rent seven hundred pounds Sterling.

Bending our course westward along the post-road that leads to Kirkwall, keeping in view the south shore, we again pass through a corner of St. Ola, around the Bay of Scalpa; and after travelling over an extensive tract of high, broken, wet, marshy ground, enter the more fertile parts of the parish of Orphir. The east side of this parish, for some length, is at first sight very unpromising, bleak and barren, the soil a broken peat-moss cut down from time to time for fuel, or washed off by the water; here and there a solitary patch of cultivated land, with a few dreary straggling houses, and the surface even scantily covered with heath. But the centre of the parish makes ample amends for this scene of sterility. In advancing forward, the soil improves first into a mixture of moss and clay; then into one compounded of sand, clay and gravel; and at last it discovers a rich loam, that predominates over a large tract in the middle. The grain raised here, more on account of the excellence of the soil than the skill of the farmers, is rather better than in some other places; and what adds to the same effect, is their making use of compost manure in preference to sea-weed, which is found, wherever it is used solely, to spoil the quality of the grain. Besides cultivating their little farms, the ordinary employment of the people is to furnish peat to some of the neighbouring people that are in want of that article, and to burn a little kelp in the season; and while they are employed occasionally through the whole year in catching cooths or fillocks, properly coal-fish,



fish, a part of their time is spent in fishing the dog-fish, for obtaining its oil, in summer. Mackerel and herring often visit these coasts, the former of which are sometimes caught in small numbers; but the latter, either from want of skill, industry or capital, are suffered to pass by in myriads. But this scandalous neglect of what might contribute so much, not only to their wealth, but their comfort, is so far from being confined to them alone, that it attaches equally to the other inhabitants of Orkney. Besides these and many other kinds of fish, they have trouts in the Waukmill Loch in abundance, which is perhaps the reason that otters haunt it so often, and with so much seeming satisfaction. Besides the advantages of excellent grain and plenty of fish, the inhabitants are so fortunate as to procure health by the frequent use of a chalybeate spring, in the virtue of which they place such implicit confidence as supercedes the necessity of medicine. A harbour, fit only for small ships, at Howton, is the only one in the parish\*; but it has acquired celebrity from being the scene of some remarkable transactions of old, when the parish contained the palace, and was the chief residence of Earl Paul and other ancient Counts of Orkney. From the high ground to the north, near the place where that palace is supposed to have been situated, there is a view as extensive as it is pleasant. To the east the eye is delighted with the winding and indented shores of the mainland, the cultivated fields sheltered from the northern blast by the hills in that direction, the south isles under the meridian sun, and the sea contracting itself as it advances westward, till it is lost in the Atlantic Ocean, with the romantic hills of Hoy, Waes, and Strathnaver terminating the varied prospect.

As we turn to the north-west, on leaving this prospect, we enter the united parishes of Frith and Stennis, where the first object that strikes the attention is a plain between two hills, covered with a number of little hillocks or artificial *tumuli*, at only a small distance from one another. Though this has evidently been a field of battle, as the style of the monuments refers to a remote period, it cannot contain the graves of the Earl of Caithness and his troops, who fell at the battle of Bigswell or Summerdale, in the sixteenth century. Here the Loch of Stennis opens to the view in all its

\* Parochia bonum portum piscatoribus prebens. Ben. MS. Adv. Lib. Edinburgh.

beauty.



beauty. Rising at the head of the Bay of Cairnston, from the Bridge of Waith, through which the tide in some measure alternately fills and empties it, the direction of it is north-west to the extent of five miles; and dividing near the middle into two, by the names of the Lochs of Stennis and Harray, it on the whole forms a pleasant sheet of water. Trout in vast numbers, and of an excellent quality, are caught here, as are also flounders and some other kinds of fish; and in the part of it farthest north, known by the name of Harray, in which there are many small holms, several species of wild-fowl, as swans, ducks, lapwings, gulls, terns, and mergausers, build in vast numbers.

The celebrated stones of Stennis, consisting of a circle and semicircle, with a few placed apparently irregular, stand on the banks of this loch, where the land stretches out at both sides, and nearly divides it in two at the Bridge of Broigar.

Along its east side, for a considerable space, are some beautiful fields of natural grass, among rich ones of cultivated land, near which are houses in considerable numbers, well built, and uncommonly neat in their appearance. They are occupied, at least some of them, by men here called Udallers, who are little proprietors of land, that has never been held by the feudal tenure, nor subjected to either service or payment to any superior. Had these the industry to avail themselves of plenty of excellent marl in their vicinity, they might soon render their farms and little estates far more productive and valuable. This excellent manure is, however, sometimes sought after; and in digging, in order to procure it, the horns and bones of stags have been found under a layer of peat-moss, sunk to a very considerable depth.

Marl of the same fructifying nature is also found in the parish of Frith, where there is the same inattention to its application. The road from Stennis thither is through a narrow defile of no great length, terminated by the long bay of Frith, around which, on all sides, near the bottom of the adjacent hills, there is a considerable extent of flat ground, fertile, tolerably well cultivated, and populous, composing the principal part of that parish. To the bay of Frith swans resort, as well as to the loch of Stennis, in winter; and besides many species of fish, oysters are taken in it, frequently of a  
large



large size, and at the same time of such an excellent quality, as not only to equal those of the Forth, but even to vie with the much admired ones of Colchester.

The name Stennis, it is most likely, has been derived from the standing stones, and is a contraction of Stonehouse; and little doubt can be entertained, that the other name took its origin from the word *Fiord*, which, in both Icelandic and Norwegian, sister dialects of the Gothic language, is of the same import with Fretun or Frith, in allusion to that long frith-like bay that lies as it were in its bosom. Peat-mosses of different kinds bound the latter on the north, in which is dug turf that proves excellent fuel; and in one of them, in particular, are found, pretty deep buried in that substance, not only the roots, but stems of trees, much larger than any that, for many ages past, have grown in the country.

In directing our view still farther north, we meet with the united parishes of Evie and Rendal, extending along the shores of the mainland to the distance of ten miles in length, and from one to two in breadth, containing a large quantity of fine land, equally fit for raising corn and for pasturage. Situated on a gentle declivity toward the north, and in the neighbourhood of the shores, where there is no want of plenty of excellent materials, they might be enclosed and improved at a moderate expence, and with advantage to the proprietors. They are, notwithstanding, in the same state with others whose circumstances and situation are less favourable; much of the land is *runrig*; the grass is common to many of the adjoining tenants; and the houses are both poor in themselves, and situated with very little regard to conveniency. Even the seat of one of the principal proprietors, though pleasantly situated by the sea-side in the midst of a large extent of fine ground, is in no higher degree of cultivation than the little farms adjacent. Aikerness, which is the name of this beautiful spot, has, on the one hand of it, a bay of the same name, where ships of two hundred tons burden may find convenient anchorage; and on the other, a pleasant lake of deep water skirted with grass, to which the lapwing, gull, coot, and dusky grobe resort in summer in vast numbers, for incubation. The hills, which are mostly common, support three thousand sheep, which are at all times suffered to roam at large without a shepherd; and even the swine, which  
are



are known to be so pernicious to fields of every sort, are under no more restraint, though their number exceeds four or five hundred. The cattle and horses which these parishes maintain are in proportion. The arable ground amounts to twelve hundred planks, each containing forty fathoms square; what is in pasture, four times that quantity; and the rental of the whole, exclusively of the kelp shores, which produce twenty tons of kelp annually, is very little less than eight hundred pounds Sterling. The people are employed variously, some few of them being tradesmen, some sailors, none of them fishers by profession, though their situation is favourable to this employment; and, however unproductive their labour may be, they are almost all of them some way or other employed in the cultivation of the land, which, with very little aid, supports a population of sixteen hundred.

Many excellent fish, such as cod, ling, dog-fish, haddocks, skate, holi-but, fillocks, and cooths, or the coal-fish, of different ages, frequent these coasts, and are sometimes caught when the weather permits, or when the people find leisure, or are prompted by want or inclination. Few places, when all circumstances are considered, seem more favourable than this for a fishing station.

Along the shores of Evie there are several of those ancient monuments, known by the name of Pict's houses, as well as in other parishes similarly situated. Some tumuli or barrows are likewise to be seen; but all these, and also the church of St. Nicholas, have now ceased to exhibit the property which they formerly had, of nocturnal illumination\*.

A ridge of hills running west till it terminates in Costa-head, constantly covered with a variety of rock birds, separates them from the extensive, fertile, and populous parishes of Birfa and Harra. These united parishes, one of which is situated on the shores of the Atlantic, of a dry rich soil, indifferently cultivated—the other more inland, more wet, and less productive, were anciently known by the name of the province of Bergisherad.

For the origin of this name, which sounds but harsh to a British ear, in vain do we search, as has been the fashion for some time past, either the Celtic language, or even any of what are styled the learned languages; since

\* Wallace's Description of Orkney.



those that have made the attempt, have as yet produced nothing satisfactory.

Had they, instead of looking into these for information respecting the north, turned their attention to the dialects of the Gothic, one of which was once spoken here, their labours on the subject of antiquity might have been both more instructive and more successful. In these we are informed, Birgis or Birsa signifies hunting, and Harad, now Harra, a territory; and if these derivations be just, the conclusion would naturally be, that these parishes of old composed a district destined principally, if not solely to the amusement of hunting\*. This is by no means improbable; for before Kirkwall was a place of any great note, the princes perhaps, and certainly the counts, and even the bishops, had their chief residence in Birsa; and it is almost needless to observe, that in a barbarous age, when war is the business of men of rank and fortune, hunting very seldom fails to be their favourite amusement. Neither are their nature, their form, nor their dimensions ill adapted to that purpose. Their western extremity is a flat, fertile, and rather narrow tract of land, which opens gradually towards the east, till it swells at length to an immense amphitheatre, bounded by the hills of Sandwick, Orphir, and Rendal. Game was also perhaps found there in abundance. Besides what they at present contain, there were formerly, it is evident, some other kinds, such as hares, and several sorts of red and fallow deer, the horns of which have been often dug from the earth in various parts of the country.

To this it may be added, that several beautiful lakes of different sizes are dispersed through this district, with some pretty large rivulets intersecting it in various directions; and as the former of these contain plenty of swans, ducks, and other water fowl, so both of them abound in those kinds of fish that generally frequent fresh water, all of which might have contributed to vary, as well as to enlarge the sphere of the amusement.

These parishes discover at present much difference of soil, some pretty deep, some thin or shallow, some, especially in Birsa, dry and sandy; whereas in Harra it is mostly of a deep clay, sometimes intermixed with ground

\* Birsa, venari. Herad, tentorium. Ihre, Glos Suigoth.



that is wet and swampy. Though, in several parts of them, marl of an excellent kind might be had with little expence or labour, the inhabitants have hitherto made very little use of this as manure, but satisfied themselves with a scanty portion of compost of dung and earth, to raise alternately bear and oats, when they might have added to them, not only some other kind of grain, and all of a superior quality, but also flax and hemp in great perfection.

For want of an accurate survey, we cannot determine the proportion between the land in tillage, and what is entirely uncultivated; but the whole is believed to amount to fifty-eight square miles, including the lochs already mentioned, some of which it would be no great difficulty to drain, and thus add much valuable land to the parishes.

The people are employed on their little farms in spring and harvest; in summer they burn not more than twenty tons of kelp at an average; and, filling up the intervals with catching the ordinary kinds of fish for their own consumption, they support themselves without aid from others, though the population be so considerable as to amount to two thousand.

Some monuments of antiquity may still be seen there, among which may be reckoned the ruins of that magnificent palace, reared by the ancient Earls, situated on a beautiful green spot, near the church on the sea-side, fronting what is called the Burgh of Birfa. This last is a small portion of pretty high land, which the force of the ocean has broken off from the mainland, and formed into a separate island, to which there is access by land only at low water.

From the remains of a wall yet to be seen on the land-side, and the marks of some huts within it, there is much reason to believe that, as the name Burgh\* imports, it must have been, like some others through the islands, what may be denominated a rock fortification. In a later period, it served a very different purpose, as there are in the remains of it a chapel, said to have been dedicated to St. Peter, which, like its fellow in the burgh of Deerness, was, till of late, a place of pilgrimage, and the receptacle of many a devout oblation. Time, operating with other circumstances, has now destroyed the credit of their virtues.

\* Ihre; Borg, or Burgh, Munimentum.





Drawn by J. R. Smith Esq.

Eng. by J. R. Smith.

*Castle of Bala, Seat of the Earls of Orkney.*

Published by Longman, Hurst, Rees, & Orme, Stationers Row, Oct. 25, 1807.







Picſe- houſes are ſo very frequent, ſome of which confer names on places, of which Caſtragoe may ſerve as an example.

Single erect monumental ſtones are not unfrequent. Of theſe, one by itſelf gives the name of Stanegarth to a piece of excellent land that lies around it; two, known by the name of Stanerandy, ſtand on a tumulus or barrow: and three, of a much ſmaller ſize, amidſt a number of very large tumuli, concerning which even tradition ventures not to give any opinion.

The names of many of the places here are evidently of Norwegian extraction. This need excite no wonder, when it is conſidered, that in Harra, on account of its diſtance from the ſea, and, of conſequence, little intercourſe with ſtrangers, this language was ſpoken both in greater purity, and to a later period, than in any of the other iſlands.

Marble and alabaſter are ſaid to have been diſcovered both at Buquoy and Swanay in Birſa. Turning from theſe pariſhes, and advancing ſouth, with the ocean on our right hand, and in ſight, we next enter the united pariſhes of Stromneſs and Sandwick, by far the moſt extenſive and populous of any that have yet been mentioned. Toward the weſt and ſouth-weſt, they form the boundary of the mainland; their names are derived, the former from the ſhape of the land, which ſtretches to ſome length in the face of a ſtrong current \*, and the latter from a large ſandy bay †, ſurrounded with ſome of the fineſt and beſt cultivated land in the whole pariſh. They exhibit through their whole extent great diverſity of ſurface. Their weſt ſide is in general high, forming a part of the ridge which ſhelters the iſland in that direction: towards the ſouth and eaſt, they are more plain, more fertile, and better cultivated, and extend to the bay of Cairſton and loch of Stennis, their reſpective boundaries in theſe directions.

They contain thirty-one ſquare miles, a ninth part of which only has yet been cultivated: there is about the ſame proportion in excellent natural graſs; and the remainder, comprehending more than two thirds of the whole, has been allotted hitherto for paſturing ſheep and cattle. Their productions are of the ſame nature with thoſe of the other pariſhes; neither is

\* Strom, Currens. Ihre.

† Wick, Sinus. *Idem.*



their mode of agriculture materially different, the same kind of bear and oats being sown alternately on the same field: the increase is much the same, but the grain is of rather a superior quality; and though there is abundance of both limestone and marl that could be easily procured, the small farmers have as yet contented themselves with sea-weed alone, or mixed with some portion of dung and earth, as a compost for manure.

An improvement that merits attention, however, has lately been introduced into the parish of Sandwich by one of the principal proprietors. This is the raising of flax of an excellent quality, for the dressing of which he is about to erect a mill; to which improvement he has added a tannery on the loch of Stennis, and a brewery at no great distance; all of which are entire novelties in the country.

Stromness, which is in their immediate vicinity, will, it is likely, prove the nursing mother of these improvements. This village, which, at the beginning of last century, consisted of a few irregular huts, set down, as whim or conveniency directed, by the side of the harbour, has of late risen so rapidly into consequence, that the cause deserves to be explained.

By means of several acts of Parliament, enacted when the principles of commerce were but little attended to, and as little understood, the Royal burghs had assumed the right of taxing the hamlets and villages that were in their neighbourhood in an arbitrary proportion of the burdens which they themselves were bound in law to sustain. Stromness suffered, or at least thought so, from the exercise of this right claimed by the neighbouring burgh, and therefore long murmured under a burden which was represented as disproportioned to her trade and her ability; and at length, after repeated remonstrances, refused to bear it any longer. The method of compulsion was instantly adopted by a reference of the point in question to  
 1754. the Supreme Court, who pronounced this judgment: 'That there was no sufficient right in the borough of Kirkwall to assess the village of Stromness; but that the said village should be quit thereof, and free therefrom, in all time coming.' This sentence, which has every appearance of being founded in justice no less than in law, was, in the spirit of litigation, appealed from, but happily confirmed in the House of Lords.  
 1758.

Thus





Drawn by J. MacKay

Engr. by J. MacKay

*View of Hermann's, Gracemary & Hay.*

Published by Longman, Brown, Green & Co., Stationers' Hall, Oct. 1847.







Thus a paltry village in the remote regions of the north was at that period enlightened enough to know its own rights, and had spirit sufficient to reclaim them; while others of great consequence tamely submitted to the yoke, till, emancipated by this memorable decision, they reaped the fruit of her spirited exertions. From that time Stromness became a place of more note, in consequence of the freedom she had obtained; and her trade, as trade always should be, neither curbed by absurd regulations, nor shackled by the corporation spirit, will probably soon enable her in her turn to acquire an ascendant over, and prescribe laws to, her former lordly superior.

The inhabitants are tradesmen, shopkeepers, sailors, shipmasters, pilots, and small proprietors of lands, who are in general an industrious and enterprising people; and in point of comfortable living, social spirit, and hospitality to strangers, are not inferior to those of the same rank, in any similar situation, through Scotland\*.

Long has their harbour been a place of great resort for shipping; for, nearly three hundred years ago, ships of different nations, and particularly French and Spanish, in great numbers, occasionally put in there, allured by the excellence of the accommodation†.

Through the whole of the north, there are few that can compare with it, either in point of safety or commodiousness. The entrance to it is from the south, by a narrow passage of a quarter of a mile; it expands to double that dimension as it advances up through the land, which it does a complete mile: it has a firm clay bottom, and a depth of water sufficient for vessels of a thousand tons burthen, and is sheltered from the violence of the winds in all directions.

Two Holms guard it from the east, beyond which there is also, as it were, a portion of the same harbour, in which ships of still greater burthen

\* This town bears every mark of having been constructed by a sea faring people. The houses next the bay have each a quay projected into the sea, for the accommodation of boats, and the landing of goods. But while much labour has been bestowed to render the town of easy access from the sea, they seem not to have thought access from the land of any importance. In many places the streets are so narrow, and crooked, that a wheeled carriage could not find its way through them.—E.

† Ben. MS. Adv. Lib. Edin.



commonly ride, on account both of its easier access and superior depth of water. Excellent, however, as it is confessed to be, the ships that touch there in the space of a year, at present, do not at an average amount to above three hundred and twenty; whereas formerly they certainly doubled, or even perhaps tripled that number. To account for this decrease, it may be observed, that the Pentland Frith, which is the most direct passage for the trade in this quarter, has been, by a nautical survey, the erection of a lighthouse, and the experience of mariners, divested of almost all its terrors: and, in case of contrary winds, the noble harbour of the Long Hope is near, and easy of access; so that vessels now generally prefer the direct course through the frith, to the more circuitous one by Stromness.

Mines of lead and of iron have been found near this town, of no unpromising appearance; but after some progress had been made in working the former about fifty years ago, it was abandoned, perhaps for want of skill, perseverance or capital.

Mineral springs, which are in several places found here, would prove the existence of metals, even though there had been no such discovery; and among the rest there is one that has been made use of; and, from the nature of the complaints which it is said to have removed, it appears to contain sulphur.

Few of those ancient ruins, that are known by the name of PICTS-HOUSES, are met with in this district, though tumuli or barrows are numerous.

Among some of the latter that an inquisitive curiosity has opened, there was one that contained three stone chests, in one of which was a skeleton, with a bag containing bruised bones; the second had in it a skeleton, in a sitting attitude; and the third contained a parcel of human bones, with some heads and hair, which, when first discovered, had the appearance of being rotten, but on their exposure to the air seemed to resume their former freshness. Some of the same kind have been found to contain stone chests a foot and a half square, and in these were small *urns*, the contents of which were, either ashes alone, or mixed with bones; and in one of these chests, a jar or *urn*, with the same contents, of such capacity as would have contained thirty Scots pints of water.

As



As a proof that deer have once been inhabitants of this district, their horns have been dug up from under a stratum of peat, on a bed of marl, similar to those found in the parish of Harra.

To show that these parishes, like most others in the country, have been but little improved, it may be remarked, that the difference between the valued and real rent is very inconsiderable; the former is 5008*l.* Scots, the latter is only 6500*l.* in money of the same denomination.

Their population, including the village of Stromness, which contains thirteen hundred and fifty people, appears, from an accurate list that has been taken lately, to be upwards of three thousand.

The picturesque scenery on their south-west quarter arrests the attention of a stranger, as a striking instance of the blending together of the sublime and beautiful. So far as the eye can reach toward the east, the sea washes the shores of the mainland in the form of a serpentine river; the coasts of Hoy and of Stromness gradually descending to the level rocks on their borders, and stretching out their arms. The little island of Græmsay, flat and fertile, lies betwixt them, and discovers a clothing of rich verdure, similar to their own. All of them are finely contrasted with the lofty, black and barren hills of Hoy, terminating in perpendicular precipices of immense height, from which torrents rush down sometimes with violent impetuosity, forming the most striking cascades, and, with the Atlantic ocean, in awful majesty, rolling in mountainous billows through the mouth of Hoy sound, spend their force on the adjacent rocks.

II. GRÆMSAY, distant from Stromness about a mile and a half, extends from east to west nearly the same distance, and about a mile in breadth: the whole of it is level, and seems to be of an excellent soil, that is either cultivated for the production of grain, or suffered to remain in old grass for the pasturing of cattle, as is most convenient. The interior parts of the island, under a thin soil, contain a bed of schistus or slate through almost its whole extent, which has hitherto been applied to no other use than to cover some country houses. The men who reside in this pleasant spot are distinguished for their strength and their stature, and excel much in fishing, for  
which



which their situation is admirable. By this employment, and the productions of the land, a hundred and eighty inhabitants subsist comfortably; and, had they peats or turf for firing, and a place of worship within the island as formerly, their condition would be very comfortable.

The rental of the island is about 150l. Sterling.

III. HOY is separated from the former by a narrow sound of a mile in breadth, and consists of by far the highest land in the whole islands. This circumstance perhaps gave birth to its name, which in some of the Gothic dialects signifies a hill \*.

Almost the whole of it is occupied by three large hills, ranged in the form of a triangle, of which that to the north-east is the largest, arising from a plain, with a broad base, to the height of twelve hundred feet perpendicularly. Except along the north shores, which are bordered with a loamy soil and a rich verdure, the parish has a soil composed of peat and clay, of which the former commonly predominates, black, wet and spongy: this seems to arise from a greater quantity of rain falling here than in many other parts of the country.

From this account it will readily appear, that the ground destined for the production of grain, and that appropriated for feeding cattle, must bear but a very small proportion to what is covered with heath, and allotted for sheep pasture. Nearly two thousand of these animals roam at large through this extensive tract, a prey to dogs, eagles, and other birds of the same nature; whereas, were they tended at all seasons, and suitably managed in other respects, they might, as in other places, be of great advantage both to the tenants and proprietors.

On these hills are many alpine plants, and among them some delightful vallies, intersected with rivulets, whose banks are decked with flowers and sheltered with shrubs, such as the birch, the hazel and the currant; which are sometimes honoured with the name of trees, because in this particular situation they have risen ten or twelve feet above the ground that supports them.

\* Hoy, vel Hoja, Collis. Ihre, Glof. Suigoth.









Eng. by H. Dent & Son.

Drawn by J. Dent Esq.

*The Dwarfie Stone under the Hill of Moy.*



In some parts of these glens, the sound of the human voice, or the report of a musket, reverberates from the rocks and sides of the mountains in such a manner as to form a most pleasant echo, that will distinctly repeat many syllables.

Long ago this island produced birch trees; and, what is far more extraordinary, Alpine or white hares, that were hunted with dogs, were common: and veins of both iron and lead, and grains of gold, with several other things that were valuable, were found in it\*. At present mineral springs are found in different places, and iron ore, together with lead ore, of such quality, that when the late Dr. Black assayed some of it, he found that from every ton of the ore there could be extracted forty-six ounces of silver. 1800.

Few monuments of antiquity are to be found in this island. The Dwarfie stone, of which so many ridiculous tales have been so often told, has perhaps no just claim to be ranked in that number. This stone, which lies to the south-east of the Warthill, on the brink of a valley, is a sand or freestone of the same nature with those on the rock above it, from which it seems to have been broken off, either by the hand of man or its own gravity, and tumbled to its present site, where it has been afterwards hollowed out with an instrument, into the whimsical form which it now bears. Its greatest length is thirty-two feet, its breadth seventeen, its thickness above the surface of the earth not less than seven feet and a half; and the inside of it is divided into three apartments, in one of which is something like a bed, five feet eight inches long by two broad; the other is a sort of small room; and between them there is a space that seems to have been intended for a fire-place, as there is a hole cut in the roof, or upper part of the stone, for the smoke perhaps to issue through. To give it still more the resemblance of a dwelling, a stone of the same nature, and nearly of the same shape, has been rolled down, and placed in such a way as to serve the purpose of a door to the entrance of the other.

Tradition and some authors affirm it to have been the habitation of a giant and his consort †, from which they occasionally issued forth for depredation. In all probability it has been the cell of some hermit.

\* Ben. MS.

† Ben. MS. Adv. Lib. Edin. Vid. Appendix, No. VII.



This parish, in point of extent, is large; but the number of people is 1800. small: they at present scarcely amount to five hundred and twenty.

IV. WAAS, or WAES, though in the general division it has been considered as a distinct island, makes in fact a part of the former, and in all probability derives its name from the word *Voes*, which in the ancient language of these islands signify such creaks or bays as penetrate far into the land; and in these the east side of the parish abounds; two of them are called Lyawoe and Thurvoe.

The west and north quarter of this district is similar in every respect, and indeed makes a part of the former, on which are pastured some thousands of very fine sheep, together with a vast number of horses and black cattle, all of them of an excellent quality. Towards the east and south the land is more low, more level, and of a much better soil, which produces grain of the ordinary kinds, but of a superior quality to what is raised in other places in the country.

This superiority of the grain is by no means to be attributed entirely to the excellence of the soil, but to the advantage of situation near the high hills, where the clouds are constantly furnishing plenty of moisture; and still more, perhaps, to the vicinity and intercourse with Caithness, where agriculture has made far more progress than in the best cultivated of these islands.

Besides the advantage arising from this circumstance, this parish enjoys another, from being situated on the banks of the Pentland Frith, which abounds with fish of various kinds, and of the finest quality; in catching which, the people, in the intervals of their labour on the land, find a lucrative employment.

Besides small fish of different sorts, which they catch in great numbers for the consumption of their own families, they engage in the lobster fishing, that for many years past has been carried on to considerable extent by a London Company; in addition to which, some seasons, seventy thousand fine large marketable cod-fish have been both caught and cured in this parish.

It derives also a great benefit from the excellence of its harbours, which are the OREHOP, the KIRKHOPE, and particularly the LONG-



HOPE;\* which, for readiness of access, and extent of accommodation, yields to few or none in any part of the Continent of Europe.

This seems now to be generally admitted; for the ships that have occasion to touch here, instead of resorting in crowds to Stromness, as they have done for centuries past, are daily preferring the Longhope, as in every respect better suited to their advantage and conveniency.

This district, however, is neither distinguished for objects of antiquity, nor peculiar productions.

Together with many other rock-birds, the Lyar, which has been mentioned under a Latin name, without a description, by an author of much celebrity †, frequents the lofty precipitous rocks of this parish and of Hoy, but not exclusively; for it has been found in some other places in similar situations.

The number of people it contains, according to the last list that was taken, does not amount to fewer than seven hundred and fifty.

V. RISSAY is a little island, situated at a very small distance from the former, of which it may with propriety be considered as a pendicle or fragment, similar both in its nature and productions.

VI. FARAY is another, nearly of the same description, removed a little farther from the principal; and is noted chiefly for its excellent sheep pasture.

VII. CAVAY is another small island, that lies about two miles distant from Waes, and as far from the mainland; and is said to have taken its name from the quantity and quality of the cheese made in it in former times. As it is deficient in the production of neither corn nor grass, by which cows might have subsisted plentifully at all seasons, this derivation is by no means improbable. Three families, consisting of six persons each, inhabit it, and live on butter, milk, and fish, with much sobriety, industry, and decency

\* Supposed to be a corruption of *Longvoe*, *Long-harbour*. *Voe* in the Norse means *harbour*; and this bay is of considerable length.

† Sir Robert Sibbald, Nat. Hist. Scot.



of manners. Formerly, a salt-pan was wrought here ; and, to accommodate the people in a place of worship, a chapel had been erected, the ruins of which are still to be seen in a churchyard, which, till lately, was used as a burial ground.

This island at present makes a part of the parish of Orphir.

VIII. FLOTAY is three miles long, and little more than one broad, situated in the sea that divides Waes from South Ronaldshay, from each of which it is distant about three miles. A salt-pan, which formerly contributed to the advantage of the place, now in ruins, furnished a name to a large bay, which nearly divides the island, and, under the name of the Panhope, formed a harbour, well known to every mariner accustomed to visit these northern regions. The west side, and that long point called the Rone, as well as the east side, and around the Panhope, is wholly covered with long heath, giving shelter to numbers of moorfowl. The rest of it is either clothed with grass, or cultivated for corn ; and some of the latter is said to be so fertile as to produce nearly double the quantity of grain that is produced by the same extent of land in the other islands.

Among many others, the burrough ducks (sheildrakes), and dunters (eider ducks), terns, seapies, and snipes, frequent this island ; in which also are found the *imperatoria* of Wallace, the *oxalis acetosella* (Fl. Suec.), and the *rhodiola rosea* (Lin.), plants not so commonly met with through the neighbouring islands.

No remains of that long house, by some denominated a church, in which the clergy were said to be accustomed to assemble annually, can now be discovered, nor of those three trophies, called Crosses : all remembrance of them is entirely lost, nor does there exist concerning them the slightest tradition\*.

The island makes a part of the charge of Waes, and supports comfortably two hundred inhabitants.

IX. SOUTH RONALDSAY is, of all the islands to the south of the Mainland, the most considerable in point of population ; as, on about eighteen

\* Ben. MS. Adv. Lib. Edinburgh.



square miles, of which the island consists, there are upwards of sixteen hundred inhabitants. Along the north side of the island, by the ferry of Water Sound, the land is very well cultivated, and seems equally fit for corn and pasture ; and indeed, for both these purposes, the whole island seems rather better calculated than most others. The arable and grass grounds here bear a much greater proportion to the common pasture than elsewhere ; and, like Waes, their mode of agriculture is better ; the consequence of which is, not only better grain, but such a quantity as will both support the numerous inhabitants, and furnish some for export, to supply the consumption required in Stromness, and Kirkwall.

Even the bowels of the earth seem to contain treasures. In proof of this, it may be observed, that a promising vein of lead-ore was long since discovered near Grimness Head on the north, and another, almost as much so, on the south-west, near Widewall ; but, owing to different causes, they have not as yet been very advantageous. A much more plentiful, as well as certain, source of wealth is found in the kelp-shores, which annually produce        tons ; and in the sea, that abounds with fish in vast numbers, and of the very best quality.

The only, or at least the most successful attempt that has been made to draw from this source, has been by a rich and enterprising Company in England, that happily, for some years past, has entered pretty extensively into the lobster and cod-fishing ; by which they have hitherto been able to employ twenty smacks for carrying live fish weekly to the London market.

For this, or any other purpose of a similar nature, the island is excellently furnished with harbours ; for, besides several places where ships may anchor for a short time, it has the safe and pleasant road of St. Margaret's Hope on the north, and, on the west, the still more commodious Bay of Widewall.

Neither is the island quite destitute of some interesting objects of antiquity. Not only are some tumuli met with in different quarters, but also several Picts-houses in ruins ; among which, what is called the *Hox of Hoxa* is very remarkable.

In the east side, on the top of a hill near Stows-head, are the remains of a triangular monument of stones, that have been perpendicular, two of which are broken down, and only one remaining ; respecting all which, tradition



tradition is entirely silent. The head itself is, by the force of the ocean, hollowed out into caves, in which there is generated much stalactical matter.

To the north, and at no great distance, is a most beautiful vale, with the ocean on one side, and gently declining hills on the other; which, for the production of every sort of beneficial crop, is far superior to any other part of the island. In the middle of this pleasant spot, on the brow of a hill, is a monumental stone, sixteen feet high, which, like many others through the country, bears no marks of human art, in carving, figures, or inscription.

The whole delightful dale is known by the name of *Paplay*.

There are several Popish chapels also, which would scarcely deserve our attention, had there not been dug up near one of them, at St. Margaret's Hope, deers' horns, together with human bones, intermixed with burnt stones and ashes.

X. SWANAY, which is no more than a mile long, and half as much in breadth, lies to the south-west of the former, at the distance of four miles, in the very heart of the Pentland Frith.

The inhabitants, to the number of twenty-one persons, notwithstanding, live in the most perfect security, and subsist by means of a little grain which their industry raises, catching fish, when the weather permits, and particularly by their skill in piloting ships, several thousands of which pass by them annually.

Did we credit the tales of former times, wells and swelchies\*, gulphs and whirlpools, are constantly surrounding this island, like so many gaping monsters, more hideously formidable than even Scylla or Charybdis, watching with an insidious avidity to devour those ships that unfortunately come within the sphere of their attraction. But since not only this, but the other friths and seas that environ the islands, have been surveyed on rational principles, these phantoms, the fruit of ignorance, have in a great measure disappeared. So little danger is there from the currents in this rapid frith

\* Swelchies. Fauces. Jaws. Ihre, Glos. Suigoth.



(the velocity of which is sometimes nine miles in the hour) carrying ships forcibly on the islands, that even in a calm, when it might be supposed greatest, a current constantly rushes off from the shore to preserve them, as may easily be understood from an acquaintance with the laws which fluids observe in their motions.

To this, as well as some other causes, it is no doubt owing, that even small boats cross it often in perfect safety. That this is really the case, we need have no hesitation in believing, from this circumstance, that though a Post-office has been established here now for more than half a century, 1744. which has required a boat to ply four times in the week between Caithness and Orkney, yet there is not an instance of a Post-boat having been lost during the whole of that period.

Neither do ships that are acquainted incur greater danger; for, besides what has been already stated respecting the currents that in general guard them from the rocks and islands, these islands create eddies, in which ships may either tack, or anchor, till the tides turn in their favour; and thus, instead of rendering more perilous, they contribute much to the safety of navigation. Many ships that were formerly intimidated by the tales of ignorance, now shape their course through this frith; and as few disasters befall them as in almost any other in the kingdom. Even in the dead of night, they can sometimes venture to navigate this formidable channel, especially since the noble commercial spirit of the age has erected in its mouth, for that purpose, a lighthouse, that had long been a desideratum to the trade in the North, no less than to the little that is carried on in this country.

XI. PENTLAND SKERRY is one of two of the same name that lye in the mouth of the frith, almost equally distant from Caithness and Orkney, to the latter of which places they belong, and have only, till of late, been occupied by birds, seals and otters, and a few black cattle for pasture in summer. In a conspicuous spot of this, which is by far the largest, the lighthouse is built with the necessary accommodations for a man to take charge of it: it is inhabited only by this man and his family.

If it be considered that three thousand three hundred ships are calculated to have passed this frith annually, previously to the erection of this lighthouse, and



and certainly many more since that period, there will be no difficulty in conceiving what vast advantage must result from it to the different branches of trade in this quarter of the world.

XII. BURRAY is separated from South Ronaldsay by Water found, a ferry of a mile broad; extends nearly four miles in length, and one in breadth; and, in point of conveniency of situation and fertility, excels most of the other islands. The grain that is usually raised here, is observed to look uncommonly well, early in the season; but, owing to its rushing rapidly up in greater luxuriance than the ground can support or ripen, it is often found in harvest, so small and hungry, as to balk the hopes of the husbandman. Far different is the case with respect to many of its other productions; for potatoes, carrots, peas, onions, and cabbage are raised in great perfection; and turnip, which has been sown for many years past, is not surpassed even in the best cultivated parts of Scotland. The same encomium may be with justice passed on the natural grass, of which it is productive, consisting principally of red and white clover, which, combined with some others, have of late furnished such truly excellent nourishment, that the cattle reared on it have been so much improved as to triple the value of the same number bred in ordinary through the islands.

This island, together with Swanay, Pentland Skerry, and the Holms as pendicles, makes a part of the pastoral charge of South Ronaldsay; and the valued rent of the whole is three thousand five hundred and twelve pounds Scots; the real fifteen hundred pounds Sterling; and the population comes very little short of two thousand.

XIII. LAMBHOLM, or LAMON, as it is more commonly called, has probably been formerly uninhabited, and appropriated to the pasturing of lambs; for which, both on account of the excellence of its grass, and convenient situation, it was extremely well calculated. Its productions now are not confined to that article; for it produces excellent grain, and affords a very comfortable abode to one family.

XIV. Co-



XIV. COPINSAY lies directly east from the mainland, from which it is distant about three miles, and is remarkable principally for furnishing an excellent landmark for ships either approaching to or taking their departure from these islands. This very circumstance, perhaps, has given birth to its name, which, in some of the dialects of the Gothic, we are told, signifies the Trade or Mercantile Island\*.

High toward the east, it presents a bold perpendicular front to the German ocean; on the other direction, more gently sloping as it faces the mainland, it extends a mile in length, and about a half in breadth. It contains some excellent corn and grass ground, often watered by the sea; and affords a most convenient haunt for a vast multitude of sea-fowl and rock-birds: it supports also, with ease, two or three families.

XV. SHAPINSAY, situated to the north of the mainland, from which, in some places, it is no more than a mile distant, is the first of the north isles that presents itself, about three miles removed from Kirkwall. If its greatest extent be considered, the dimensions will amount to nearly seven miles by five; but as it bears some resemblance to a cross, of which the length may be viewed in the light of the body, and the breadth in that of the arms, such a consideration of it will convey no very distinct idea of its surface. To subject it to measurement, it must be reduced into a regular form; and in that case, nine square miles would be all it contains.

Much of this extent, especially on the north and south side is cultivated; and indeed almost the whole is capable of cultivation, were due attention paid to it. So far, however, is this from being the case, that to the detriment, no less than to the disgrace of the proprietors, some of the arable lands are yet lying *runrig*, which is well known to throw an insuperable bar in the way of culture, besides furnishing matter for endless disputes and contentions.

The whole of this island formerly made a part of the temporality of the bishoprick of Orkney.

\* Copinskæt. Mercatura. Ihre, Glof. Suigoth.



In its south-west corner, lead ore was found of a flattering appearance; but owing to some difficulties that unexpectedly arose, the work has not been prosecuted.

The soil, though various, is in general shallow, compounded of clay, peat and sand, very imperfectly cultivated: and as there is more dependence on sea-weed than on either dung or compost as a manure, and no regard whatever paid to either lime or marl, though they exist in the island, the crops of bear and oats are neither so plentiful as they otherwise might be, nor is the grain of such superior quality. The grain that is raised annually is sufficient for the inhabitants, though the rents are paid in kind, and a large quantity thus necessarily conveyed to the King's storehouse in Kirkwall.

On one estate, the ordinary mode of husbandry has been exchanged for one that has been long practised in the best cultivated countries to the South; and the experiment has exceeded the most sanguine expectations: and as there is nothing either in the soil or situation of that place peculiarly favourable, the same mode, adopted in other instances, might be attended with the same happy consequences. The farming stock has kept pace with the improvement of the land in the instance above alluded to, as it now exceeds triple its former value. Through other parts of the island, the farming stock is of a piece with their agriculture, their horses and cattle being as puny as they are numerous. Swine are kept in great numbers, without herding or confinement, to the unspeakable destruction of both grass and corn: and the sheep, that amount to between two and three thousand, being suffered to enjoy the same natural liberty, are scarcely less hurtful in their depredations.

Little more than a furlong to the south of the island, and separated by a reef of rocks that are almost dry at low water, is situated the beautiful island of Elgar, or Ellerholm, which bears evident marks of having been formerly inhabited. Though some vestiges of a house are still to be seen on the north side, around which lye the lands that appear to have been cultivated, it is probable that it has never furnished a permanent abode for men since it was finally separated from the principal island.

At



At present it contains the ruins of an old chapel, and a Picts-house that has been opened. It furnishes pasture for a number of sheep and young cattle in summer, and gives, by its favourable situation, the utmost security to the fine harbour of Elwick.

Among a great many harbours found in the islands, this possesses some advantages, in as far as it is secure in every quarter, the ground good, the water deep, the beach, in some places at least, such, that a ship may run ashore without damage. There is plenty of fresh water at hand; and, as it opens to the south, it is convenient, in this respect, for ships bound to that quarter of the country.

In common with most of the rest, this island exhibits some monuments of antiquity. Among these may be reckoned, besides some Popish chapels of little note, many Picts houses ranged along the shore as so many forts, burghs, or castles, together with tumuli or barrows in very different situations. A monumental stone, of the same figure and dimensions with those in other places, raises its venerable head in a plain near its eastern extremity; and, to close the catalogue, on the banks of the sea facing the north, is the stone of *Odin*.

Besides its other productions, this island produces, annually, about an hundred tons of kelp; its valued rent is two thousand one hundred and thirty-six pounds Scots; its real, six hundred pounds Sterling; and its population, which for some years past has been on the increase, is seven hundred and fifty.

XVI. STRONSAY, a pretty large island, rather flat, situated to the east of the former, from which it is divided by a rapid frith of the same name, six miles wide, on that quarter bounds the group of the Orkney islands. From an inspection of the map, it appears to be not only curiously indented, but almost cut into three distinct islands, which were formerly so many separate parishes; and this intersection has probably given rise to the name conferred on it by the ancients, of the Isle of Strands, or Stronfay. Its dimensions are, seven miles long, and four broad; through which it discovers much variety in point of soil and elevation; and, while it equals several of the rest in the production of the fruits of the earth, it enjoys one advantage



over them, in its very convenient situation for an extensive and lucrative fishery. This advantage, however much despised at present, seems to have attracted attention in former times, when the island was considered as of more consequence, on account of its extensive intercourse with the east, in the flourishing state of the herring fishery, a pretty extensive one being then carried on in that island. The exact share which the inhabitants had in that business cannot now be ascertained; but it was probably not very great, as most of the operations were performed by people from the county of Fife, who, being called home in the commotions that then shook the kingdom, all fell in the battle of Kilsyth; and this circumstance unfortunately put an end to that promising species of industry.

If ever it be again resumed, the two fine harbours of which the island can boast, may contribute much to its prosperity. Linga Sound is one of these, which lies on the west side; Papay Sound, on the north-east, is the other; and both of them are, on the proper anchoring ground, secure places for shipping.

Many fine fish, such as cod, ling, halibut, haddocks, and, in the season, plenty of excellent herrings, abound near the coast; but such is either the want of time, enterprise, or capital, that, instead of making an article of commerce of these fish, they scarcely procure what is sufficient for their own consumption.

Agriculture is in much the same state as in other places. One exception ought to be noticed. A female proprietor has had spirit to bring a man from England, to inclose and improve such of the waste lands on her estate as were before but of very little utility. The attempt is unquestionably laudable, and merits the thanks of every friend to improvement; but how far it may succeed, or whether it be conducted with that skill necessary to secure success, are points which time alone can determine.

The farming stock is also much the same here as elsewhere, both as to quantity and quality. The people are the same way employed on their little farms, occasionally fishing for immediate consumption, and in the summer months manufacturing kelp, of which they make, at an average, three hundred tons annually.

As



As the valued rent is four thousand six hundred and seven pounds Scots, and the real, six hundred and fifty pounds Sterling, the small difference between these rents exhibits, in a striking point of view, the low state of the improvement of the land, which, notwithstanding, in ordinary seasons, produces much more than is necessary for maintaining nine hundred inhabitants.

In the north-west corner, a vein of lead-ore was discovered many years since, specimens of which were sent into England for the sake of trial; but as no steps have been taken in the business, the report probably was unfavourable.

Toward the east coast, among the rocks, are three mineral springs almost close together, differing in strength, though of the same nature; and such confidence do the people place in these springs, (which, together, go under the name of the Well of Kildinguie), and at the same time in that sea-weed named Dulse, produced in Guiydin, (perhaps the bay of Odin), as to have given rise to a proverb, 'That the well of Kildinguie and the dulse of Guiydin will cure all maladies but *Black Death*.'

Tornefs and Odnefs, the names of two neffes, are perhaps derived from two Scandinavian deities, Thor and Odin.

The antiquities here are, as in the other islands, tumuli, Picts-houses, and Popish chapels, in none of which is there any thing peculiar.

XVII. PAPAY-STRONSAY is a pleasant little island that lies very near, and, as it were, in the bosom of the former, on the north-east quarter, the circumference of which does not exceed three miles; and as it is of a level surface, distinguished alike for its beauty and fertility, it furnishes a very comfortable abode for a pretty extensive farmer, with his servants and other dependants, who make a part of the congregation of Stronsay.

Even in this small place, there were formerly two chapels for religious worship, the one dedicated to St. Bride, and the other to St. Nicolas. In the middle of the space between these, is an eminence known by the name of Earls-knoll, on which are apparent some graves and ruins.

Curiosity some time ago prompted the opening of one of the former, which, from the distance of the stones planted at the two extremities, ap-



peared to be upwards of eight feet; and some of the human bones it was found to contain, furnished ground for believing that the body must have been nearly of the same dimensions.

XVIII. EDAY, an island situated near the centre of the north isles, is five miles long and nearly two broad, the east side of which is green, flat, and tolerably well cultivated, while its west and north sides consist of hills moderately high, affording excellent peat, and mostly covered with heath.

The name it bears has in some instances been drawn from this clothing of heath, and in others from the number of rapid eddy-tides with which it is surrounded. By an author of great name\*, it has been supposed to be the *Ocetis* of the Egyptian geographer †. In ancient times, it is said to have been rich and populous, till plundered by some audacious invader, who, not satisfied with stripping them of their cattle and other property, expelled all the inhabitants ‡. To this account, however, we can give no great credit, as there are no marks of its ever having been more cultivated than at present; and in some of the oldest rentals of these islands, the articles paid are, instead of grain as in other places, flesh and butter; which would rather incline us to conclude it had been only destined for pasturage. Now, when  
1800. the seasons are tolerably good, there is no want of grain for supporting the people; and when prompted by need, or by inclination, to launch their boats, in the management of which they are uncommonly dexterous, they seldom return without fish of the very best kind, amply sufficient to compensate their labour.

Many boats here have been employed, for several years past, in the lobster fishing in summer, while the body of the people are occupied in the manufacture of kelp, of which there is produced nearly eighty tons annually.

The proportion of the land in tillage to the land in pasture, is much less than in most other places; but this disadvantage is more than overbalanced by the great plenty of excellent fuel it affords, not only to those who reside on it, but to several of the neighbouring islands.

\* Camden's Britannia.

† Ptolemy.

‡ Ben. MS. Adv. Lib. Edin.



To this advantage may be added another, resulting from its harbours. To the north-east, and at a small distance, lies a large holm, named the Calf, distinguished for its fine turf, and sheep pasture; and between this and the island, is an arm of the sea, that opens both to the north and south, forming the noble harbour of Calf-Sound. Another, but not of equal excellence, lies toward the west, named Fiersnefs; and in both of these, ships may find very safe anchorage, especially in the former.

This island, which is now the property of two gentlemen, belonged, in the last century, to Lord Kinclaven, who built a house here, and erected salt-pans, which were wrought with equal spirit and success during all the days of their patron.

This nobleman, who was son of Robert, and brother of Patrick Stewart Earl of Orkney, had been by Charles the First created Earl of Carrick, which name he conferred on a village situated near the harbour of Calf-Sound, which was through his influence erected by the same monarch into a burgh of barony; but as he died without any lawful issue, the title became extinct, the house crumbled down, and the village sunk into obscurity.

Trusting to the defenceless state of the country at that time, the pirate 1725. Gow entered this harbour, with a view, no doubt, to extend his depredations from this place as a centre; and he would have unquestionably done so, to the great terror as well as the detriment of the inhabitants, had not the resolute spirit of one of the proprietors, then residing in the house of Carrick, stimulated and supported by his equally intrepid neighbours, seized the pirate, his crew and his ship, and thus rid the world of one who had been for a long time a pest to society.

The Redhead, which forms one of the sides of the harbour, contains an excellent freestone quarry, from which most of the country is supplied with that article; and it has been supposed, not without good grounds, that notwithstanding the distance, it has even furnished stones for the cathedral of St. Magnus in Kirkwall.

Here there is a standing monumental stone, similar to those which are observed in the other islands; several Picts-houses may also be observed; and such a number of tumuli, especially on one spot, as may furnish reasonable grounds



grounds of conjecture, that this place has been the scene of military exploits and of blood, no less than of depredation.

The population of the island is six hundred.

XIX. FARAY is a small island, distant from the former about two miles to the west; not exceeding two miles in length and one in breadth; rather flat, and covered with verdure. Besides a very advantageous situation for fishing, it has a soil and surface more than sufficient to raise both corn and cattle, in ordinary years, to answer every demand of the inhabitants.

Almost at the same distance from Eday, but in the opposite direction, is situated the pleasant, fertile, extensive and populous island of

XX. SANDAY. Few, very few of the group can compare with this, in any respect, as will appear evident from the detail of a few particulars.

From south-west to north-east, it extends fully twelve miles; its mean breadth does not exceed a mile and a half; and the whole surface of consequence is not less than nineteen square miles. Much of the soil it contains is of a sandy nature; and this circumstance, even without any authority to support us, we would naturally conclude had originally given birth to its name\*. Except on the west side, for some distance, where it rises into a ridge of a moderate height, flatness is the characteristic of its whole surface.

By far the greater part of it is cultivated, though, unless in a few instances, not in a superior manner.

It notwithstanding produces a large quantity of grain, that is not only sufficient for the support of those within it, but may furnish a thousand bolls at least, as an article of export, in years of ordinary plenty. Here, as elsewhere, the people are employed, in the spring season, on their little fields; the greatest part of them manufacture kelp in summer; and during serene weather, when their other business permits, they sometimes go a fishing, for which employment no situation can be more favourable. This, however, has

\* Sic dicta, quia Arenosa insula. Ben. MS. Adv. Lib. Edinburgh.



not yet induced any of them to relinquish their very small farms (in which there is but little scope for industry, though they take up much of their time, and furnish only a scanty and precarious subsistence), in order to become fishers by profession, if we except a very few, who devote some months every year to the fishing of lobsters.

Though the soil is excellent, neither the quality of the grain, the nature and value of the farming stock, nor their mode of agriculture, has in it any thing that deserves notice. In one respect, indeed, they have got a step before others in their rural economy; for instead of suffering their sheep, their swine, and other live stock, to destroy their own fields or those of their neighbours, or putting them up within mudwall hill-dikes, that, as fences, can yield little or no security, they take care that none shall receive detriment; for they tend them, if not constantly, at least in the summer season. Here, as in most other places, the farming stock, consisting of horses, cattle, and even a certain proportion of the crop, belongs to the landlord or proprietor of the farm; and all this, under the name of *steilbow*, the tenant receives at his entry, and leaves on his departure from his farm, in order to its being conveyed to the next tenant. This custom, which was once common in Scotland, has originated in the poverty of farmers, the effects of which it was intended to obviate; but its direct tendency, now, without doubt, is, to relax industry.

As this island is of an extremely irregular shape, the shores are much more extensive than might be supposed from the extent of its surface; and as they are also in general flat, these circumstances enable it, even at a moderate expence; to produce a very large quantity of kelp, which has justly been considered as its staple commodity.

Accordingly, nearly a fifth part of what the whole islands manufacture is the produce of this island, which, in years when the marine plants grow to their ordinary degree of perfection, and the wetness of the weather does not obstruct their being converted into kelp, may amount to five hundred and fifty tons; as the average quantity.

But though its low situation, the extent of its shores, and the number of creeks and bays that indent or intersect it, contribute much to its value in the production of kelp, it has often, from these very circumstances,



been fatal to shipping. So much has this unhappily been the case, that in the short space of little more than half a century, there has been on this and the little island to the north, totally lost by shipwreck, property, foreign and domestic, to the enormous value of even more than half a million Sterling. To these causes of shipwreck may be added thick, rather than stormy weather: but by no means can the want of places of safety be taken into the account, since there are two harbours, Kettletoft on the south, and Otterswick on the north, that at all times of tide are equally safe and accessible. As these harbours are nearly opposite to each other, and separated only by an extensive and beautiful plain, that is thought to have a striking resemblance to the justly celebrated plain of Runnimede, the sea sometimes, in the high tides of spring and harvest, threatens entirely to divide the island. Several encroachments, if we may credit tradition, have already been made here by the sea, one of which has formed the bay of Otterswick, or Odinswick, now a league in length, reported to have been formerly not only dry land, but a forest; and the many roots of trees that are in spring-tides occasionally seen in this place, on the recess of the water, give, it must be confessed, the colour of truth to this tradition. To this instance may be added another—Runnabreck, which is now two miles distant, but is reported to have been formerly connected to, and to have made a part of the island, on which the inhabitants were accustomed to play at football.

Toward the west side of the island, the shore, to the distance of two hundred feet in one place, consists of a shelving rock, that bears some marks of having been once in a liquid state, and of having undergone some degree of calcination. The place is called Heclabir; it may be, from the resemblance it is supposed to have had to the famous Icelandic volcano; but if any such in miniature has ever existed here, tradition is silent respecting it, and it may have been swallowed up in the deep. These rocks consist of puddingstone, or *breccia*.

There is neither marble nor whinstone to be seen here, and freestone only in that quarter that looks to Eday, whose foundation is mostly composed of freestone: and in a narrow channel that separates the two islands, the



the surface of the land on both sides is not only similar in almost every respect, but the extended point in the one corresponds in some measure to the deep bay in the other.

Here there are ninety-three persons to each square mile, five to each family; the number of males born to that of females, twenty-three to twenty-two; the number of the births to the number of the people, as one to thirty-seven; and the whole inhabitants, which have been increasing in number for half a century past, now amount to one thousand seven hundred and seventy.

The oldest names among them are Torfs, Tullachs, Muirs, Swaney's, Feas; and these, together with Torsnefs, or Thorsnefs, Odinswick, Odinskar, and Hillihow, names of places and of houses, are all, without doubt, derived from that dialect of the Gothic language, which was formerly spoken here, under the denomination of Norse or Norwegian.

XXI. NORTH RONALDSAY is so named, to distinguish it from another in the south, to which it certainly has no sort of resemblance, unless in the names they bear; both of which, it is probable, have been derived from some one or other of the Ronalds, ancient Counts of Orkney. Situated to the north of Sanday, at the distance of two miles, and divided from it by a very rapid and dangerous frith, it contains about four square miles, on which live, in great peace and comfort, about four hundred and twenty inhabitants. Here the population has increased of late, as well as in the one last mentioned; but instead of five, there are here six to a family.

The whole of it is little raised above the level of the sea, dry, and of a soil composed of sand and clay in different proportions, which is cultivated in the ordinary slovenly manner, and yet produces both corn and grass of an excellent kind, and in sufficient quantity. The people are sober, honest, decent in their manners, and comparatively industrious. During winter, they spend their time in taking care of their cattle and their crops, and in collecting sea-weed for firing and manure; and when the weather is fair, so that they can venture to sea, they catch fish for their families. Spring is employed on the land, as in other places: and when the summer months arrive, almost all hands are actively employed in the manufacture of kelp, of which they make at least a hundred tons annually.



The surface, the soil, the sward, and even the rocks here, have a striking resemblance to the same objects on the north of Sanday; and as the land on both sides is equally low, the islands have been almost equally fatal to mariners. To save the lives of this most useful and respectable set of men, to preserve property, and to promote commerce, a lighthouse seventy feet high was erected some years ago on the north-east point of the island, which, together with that on the Pentland Skerry, in the other extremity of the islands, must contribute much to the safety of trade in this quarter of the world.

Even here, as well as in more extensive places, a monumental stone stands in the middle of a plain, ten feet high, and four broad, nearly of the same form with those so frequently met with elsewhere, and, like them also, there is no tradition whatever respecting either the time when, or the purpose for which it was erected. Around it, on the first day of the New Year, the inhabitants sometimes assemble for their amusement, and indulge for a while in the song and the dance.

In different parts, also, there are tumuli, one of which has been opened, and was found to contain a building of nine feet diameter, circular on the outside, and square and hollow within, in the bottom of which was a well, and in the upper part the skeleton of a man in nearly an upright attitude.

XXII. WESTRAY is an island of much greater consequence, both in extent and variety of surface, and lies at the distance of twelve miles; and as it terminates the cluster on the north-west quarter, it probably from this circumstance derives its name. Its shape bears some resemblance to a cross, the body of which may be estimated at eight, while its arms do not extend above five miles, and if reduced into a form capable of measurement, it may contain about fourteen square miles.

Through this whole extent, which stretches from south-east to north-west, it forms a ridge, low on the shores, and gently elevated towards the middle; and, from south to north, on the west side, a range of pretty high hills forms its boundary in that direction. The cultivated land, and the principal grass pasture, are on the east end, and on the north and south shores; a large portion of it is on the south-west, where both are uncommonly fine; and



and as the waste land lies in the middle of these tracts, what is on the west and north-west is inferior neither in quantity nor quality. Here, there is soil of every sort, sand, clay, loam, gravel, yarpha, or a mixture of clay and peat, as may easily be conceived from the hill and dale, the low and elevated ground, that enter into its superficial composition. While the two last described islands are entirely destitute of peat for fuel, and suffer much on this account, this has peat-moss in abundance, which, under proper management, might supply the island with this invaluable article, for the space of even more than a century. Much corn is raised here, of an indifferent quality; the grass is excellent for producing milk and butter, and feeding black cattle; and, in the strong rapid tides and boisterous seas which encircle it in every quarter, there is such plenty of fish of the very best kind, that when the weather is mild, and the sea so smooth that the boats can get off to the fishing-ground, which lies at a considerable distance, they seldom return without an ample reward for their labour. A few hands, of late, have been employed in the lobster-fishing; but the bulk of the people here, as in other places, spend the winter in idleness, the spring in the culture of their fields, and the summer, except during a few intervals that are employed in fishing, in the manufacture of kelp, in which their labour produces, at an average, three hundred tons annually. The population is about a hundred to every square mile, or fourteen hundred in all; and though several of the landholders and their families have removed from their estates, which is certainly a great detriment, it does not seem to have decreased much, if at all, from what it was formerly. Much might it be increased, were attention bestowed on the land, the sixth part of which has not yet been cultivated, though a large proportion of it is capable of improvement.

Though, on the east and south, there are two bays, where ships may ride for some time in summer, the only harbour that can be depended on is that called Pier-o'-wall, on the north-west; and this is fit for small vessels only. Formerly, it afforded accommodation for ships of much greater burthen; and it is still sheltered in all directions: but, from the blowing of the sand, which of late has been very great, the water has become so shallow, that ships which have occasion to put in here are compelled to anchor in a more open road farther out in the harbour. The blowing of the sand has also  
spread



spread desolation over some of the most beautiful and best land, not only in this island, but also in Sanday. With respect to the latter, in particular, this destructive effect has been evidently produced by the injudicious custom of cutting, or even pulling, for various purposes, a plant, here named bent (*arenosa arundo*, Lin.) which seems to take delight in a soil of this nature. But, instead of removing that plant, it should be cultivated with care, and the seeds, when ripe, collected and sown, to fix the soil, which it is found to do very effectually. The same effect may be produced by other plants of a similar nature, such as the *galium luteum*, the *elymus arenarius*, *triticum junceum*; and as these plants could be easily procured, it would certainly be an object highly meriting the attention of the landholders. This island, as well as the rest, is not destitute of some objects of antiquity. Along the shores, in many places, the eye meets with some of those ruins denominated Picts-houses, which exhibit nothing extraordinary.

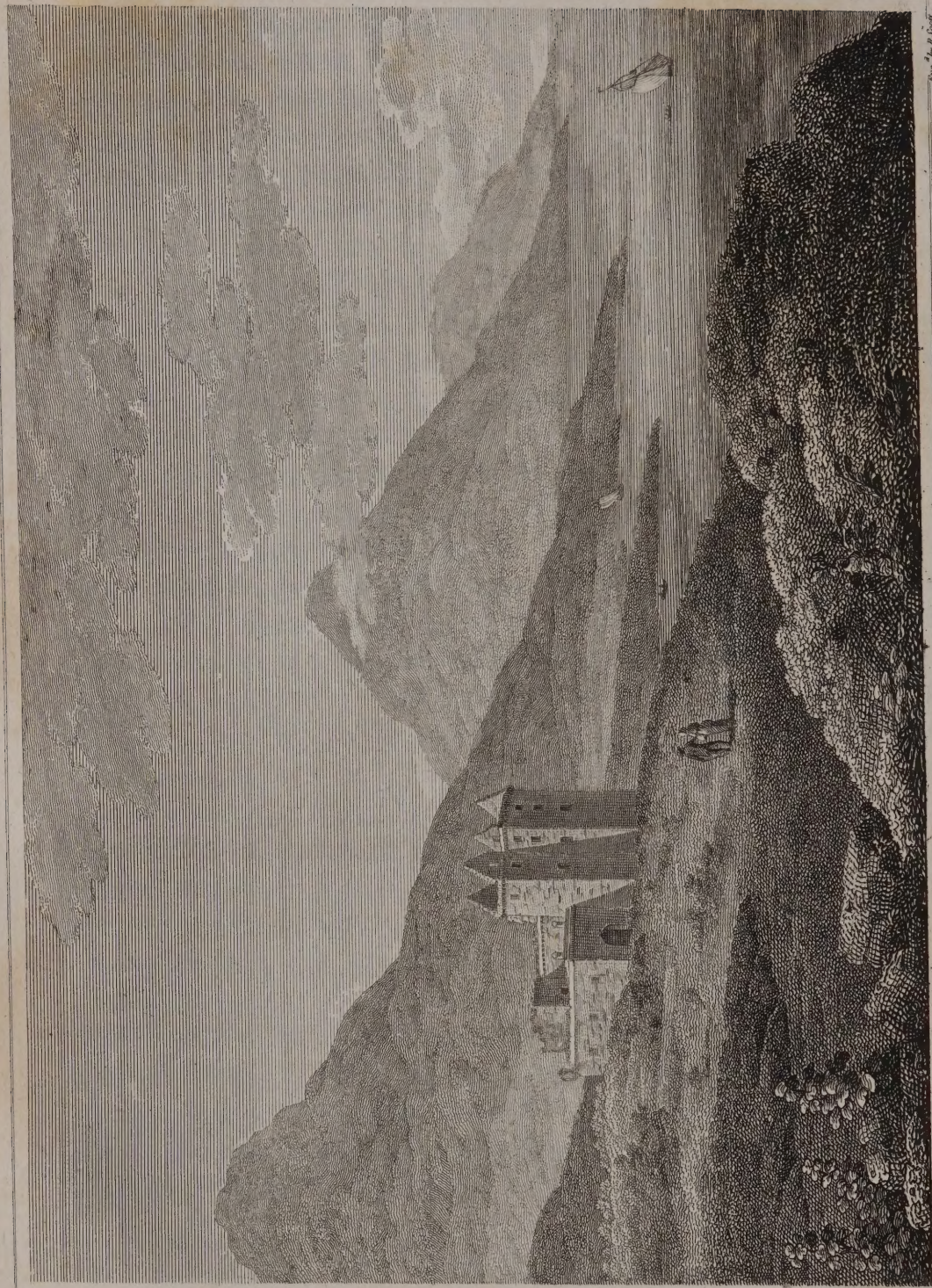
Tumuli or barrows, also, are not unfrequent; and the remains of some Popish chapels, for which the people, till lately, showed no small degree of veneration. Little farther than half a mile from the manse, appear two graves, the one much larger than the other, the least enclosed within a circle of stones, and both of them formed of four stones, placed at equal distances from one another; and human bones are frequently found near them. In two pretty extensive plains by the sea, the one on the south, and the other on the north side of the island, the blowing of the sand has opened to view a multitude of graves, all of them formed in nearly the same manner; and, though tradition ventures to give no account of them, they have very probably been the scenes of conflict and carnage in some remote period. The eye of curiosity has penetrated some of these to the north, and been gratified with the sight of not only human bones and skeletons, in a reclining posture, but of weapons of war, domestic utensils, and several other articles, the use of which could not be discovered with certainty. Close by this dreary waste is the beautiful town of Waal, the name of which has perhaps some reference to the event which must have been long perpetuated in this field of slaughter\*. By the side of it, on the borders of a beautiful loch

\* Waal, *strages*. Ihre, Glos. Suigoth.









J. Smith del.

Printed by A. Scott.

# Northland Castle Westray Orkney from the S. East

Published by Longman, Hurst, Rees, & Orme, Paternoster Row, Oct. 2. 1807.



of fresh water, at the bottom of a green hill, on a verdant plain, with a gentle declivity towards the sea, stands the noble castle of Noltland, which is believed, though erroneously, to have been built for the reception of the unfortunate Mary and her profligate paramour Bothwell, when their enemies drove them to the last extremity\*.

The oldest names of places are, Garth, Gorn, Clet, Skeal, Skealwick; and of men, Meal, Hercus, and Seater; which are all plainly of Gothic extraction.

XXIII. PAPAY-WESTRAY, a beautiful little island to the north of the former, from which it is distant scarcely more than a mile, is four miles long, and not above one broad; and in point of form, extent, dimensions, and particularly of soil, surface, and productions, bears a very striking resemblance to the pleasant and fertile isles of North Ronaldsay and Burray, already mentioned. To neither of them does it yield in the production of excellent corn, and as fine natural clover as is anywhere to be found, from a rich loamy bottom; the land gently rising toward the middle, and shelving toward the sea on both sides, till it terminates toward the north, in what is well known by the name of Mull of Papay. To add to the beauty of this charming island, a loch of fresh water ornaments its south-east corner, in which there is an enchanting isle, little larger than is sufficient to serve for the foundation of a Picts-house, on which was afterwards reared the once noble chapel of St. Tredwall.

The wonders which superstition formerly fabricated, and ascribed to this female saint, she is no longer believed to perform†.

The valued rent is seven hundred and forty-three pounds Scots; the real, two hundred pounds Sterling, besides eighty tons of kelp a year; and it supports, with ease, above two hundred inhabitants.

XXIV. EAGLESHAY is another little island of the same description, almost six miles south of Westray, from which it is divided by an impetuous frith, and is inferior to none of them in regard either to external beauty or conveniency of situation.

\* Wallace.

† Wallace's Description of the Orkney Islands.



For this last reason, no doubt, it has been chosen as a fit place of residence by several illustrious persons.

The Douglasses and the Monteiths, who were its proprietors, not only resided on this delightful spot, but also some of the ancient counts; and even the bishops, allured by its commodiousness, gave it a decided preference as an habitation. But an event of a very different kind confers on it much more celebrity: it was the scene of the unjust and cruel murder of the pious St. Magnus, the tutelary saint of these islands.

The church dedicated to that saint, which, in its structure, has some marks of antiquity, is said to have been built on the very spot where that infamous deed was perpetrated by his ambitious relation, without provocation. The island is about two miles long and one broad, the rental of which, amounting to about a hundred pounds, goes rather into the coffers of the superior than the vassal: it produces seventy tons of kelp in a season, and contains nearly two hundred very civilized and hospitable inhabitants.

XXV. ROUSAY, which lies toward the west, and is separated from it by a strait of a mile broad, is, in point of extent, of much greater consequence. The east side of it that fronts Eaglethay, on the declivity, or at the bottom of the hills, is beautifully situated, and abundantly fertile. The same with propriety may be said of the south-west corner, around the church, to some distance: only a narrow stripe near the shores is cultivated in other places: the whole middle space consists of pretty high hills, covered plentifully with heath, which shelters moorfowl, and intermixed with grafs of various sorts, for rearing and supporting great numbers of sheep, swine, and black cattle. These hills have now ceased to blaze spontaneously at night, as they were said formerly to have done\*.

In full view of the parish of Evie, and the island of Enhallow, and the rapid river-like sound that divides them at the mouth of a rivulet that tumbles in beautiful cascades from the hills, is romantically situated the house of Westness. This was, in remote ages, the celebrated abode of

\* Ben. MS. Adv. Lib. Edinburgh.



Sigurd, who shared the confidence of his superiors, and entered so deep into the councils and transactions of his time, as to transmit his name to posterity. A plain on the shore, about a quarter of a mile to the west of this place, has on it immense piles of stones, evidently the ruins of some ancient structure, around which are to be seen graves formed with stones set on edge, as in some other places; and the name of *Swendrow*, which it bears, points it out with great probability as the scene of the capture of Earl Paul, by Swein the son of Asleif, and the slaughter of his attendants, when he was with the basest intention carried a prisoner into Scotland.

The ridge, known by the whimsical name of the Camp of Jupiter Fring, is about two miles to the north-east of Westness. Several standing stones are to be met with, but little more than half the height of those in other places; some tumuli on the south side near Frotit, and a very few Picts-houses.

As by far the greatest part of it is hill-ground, and only fit for pasture, the valued rent of the island is two thousand two hundred and twenty-eight pounds Scots; the real, exclusively of thirty tons of kelp, its annual produce, about three hundred pounds Sterling; and the number of people seven hundred.

XXVI. WEIR, about a mile distant to the south, is divided from Roufay by Weirfound, which is one of the best harbours in this country. As it is only two miles long and one broad, and lies low comparatively, it is almost concealed from view by the high lands around it. Situated in the midst of a great number of islands, where tides assail it in every quarter, a large quantity of sea-weed or ware munt, it is evident, be frequently left on it; and that its name may have arisen from this circumstance is no very improbable conjecture. The soil is thin, the surface bare, and the corn and grafs of rather a mean quality; but this defect is more than compensated by the advantage which it enjoys in having turf sufficient for fuel. In directing the eye over the island, the first object that arrests the attention is the ruins of the castle of Cubberow on an eminence; an ancient chapel afterwards attracts some notice, especially as there is a church-yard around it, in which most of the graves are seven feet long, which is not to be much



wondered at, since the present inhabitants, that amount to a hundred and fifty, are many of them above the ordinary stature.

XXVII. ENHALLOW is still smaller, and nearer to Rousay on the south-west, from which it is separated by a reef of rocks, which, being covered at high-water, has unfortunately sometimes proved fatal to the unwary mariner. The sound of that name is on the south, between it and the mainland, and abundantly safe for such as are acquainted with it; but as it is narrow and the tide rapid, it should only be attempted with a fair wind, and in moderate weather. The whole island is little more than a mile in circumference; lies rather low; raises a sufficient quantity of grain and other articles to pay its rent in kind, and supports two families, its whole population. It is admirably situated for catching plenty of excellent fish, especially those kinds that delight in currents and eddies; and has moreover this peculiarity, that neither rats nor mice, nor even cats, will live in it, if we choose to credit the inhabitants.

XXVIII. GAIRSAY, situated four miles east from the former, two south from Weir, and one from the mainland, is two miles long and one broad, the greatest part of which consists of a conical hill of a considerable altitude. The whole west side of it is pretty steep; but toward the east it is both more plain and fertile; and in that quarter, as well as on the south, the lands are tolerably well cultivated. The productions are of the ordinary kind; and the inhabitants consist of eight families, of fifty persons.

Close by the south shore, which faces the parish of Rendal, stand the remains of an old house, that, in its lay, seems to have had some degree of both strength and elegance, and was the residence of Sir William Craigie, and others of that name and family.

The only harbour it has is on the east side, known by the name of the Millburn.

XXIX. DAMSAY is a beautiful little island scarcely a mile in circuit, situated in the bosom of the bay of Frith, under the hill of Wideford, about three miles distant from Kirkwall. For some time past it has been



uncultivated, to suit the whim or the convenience of the proprietor; but, from the nature of the soil, and the thick sward of fine grass which it produces, it evidently is fit both for grain and other articles, in such abundance as would liberally reward the hand of industry.

From the singular beauty of its appearance, it has sometimes, not without reason, been styled the *Tempe* of the islands. Formerly it contained a castle, reputed \* in those days of great strength; more recently, a church said to have been dedicated to the Virgin Mary, by whose influence, according to the credulity of ancient times, many wonders were performed †. This fabric, with all its mighty miracles, has now almost sunk into oblivion, and the island is applied to the pasturing of a few hundred excellent sheep, taken care of by one solitary family: and, as if it still retained some of its primitive innocence and virtue, is believed, as before, to refuse to breed or support frogs, toads, or any other kind of disgusting or noxious animal. Its most valuable quality at present is the production of a plentiful store of sea-plants, from which are burnt ten tons of kelp annually.

Thus, even from the cursory view that has been taken of such of these islands as are inhabited, they will appear to form a district that is by no means of little consequence. But were the holms, many of which are of considerable extent, also considered, were they brought under one collective view, and at the same time duly estimated in conjunction with the islands, the comparison that has been made between the whole group and Zealand, one of the seven United Provinces, would not appear such extravagant exaggeration ‡.

Though they could never arrive at the same consequence with it, in point of industry, wealth, power, or population, yet were the same parental fostering care bestowed on them that Holland in her glory conferred on her provinces, these islands, whatever opinion may be formed of them at present, would rise, by means of its invigorating influence, to a degree of importance, that would far exceed the most sanguine expectation.

\* Torfæus, Hist. Orcad. † Ben. Damfay. ‡ Campbell's Political Survey.



## B O O K II.

AN ACCOUNT OF THE EARLIEST INHABITANTS, WITH WHATEVER IS MOST REMARKABLE IN THEIR MANNERS, CUSTOMS, AND INSTITUTIONS; OF THE TRANSACTIONS AND CHARACTER OF THOSE PEOPLE THAT CONQUERED, AND MINGLED WITH, OR SUCCEEDED THEM; AND A DESCRIPTION OF SOME REMAINING MONUMENTS OF BOTH THESE PEOPLE; OF THE CHANGES THE ISLANDS UNDERWENT IN SUBSEQUENT AGES UNDER DIFFERENT SOVEREIGNS AND DIFFERENT RULERS; AND THE INFLUENCE THESE SEEM EVIDENTLY TO HAVE HAD IN RETARDING THEIR IMPROVEMENT.

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## CHAP. I.

THE TIME THEY WERE PROBABLY FIRST DISCOVERED, THE ORIGIN OF THEIR NAME, THEIR FIRST INHABITANTS, AND THE MODE OF GOVERNMENT THAT, IF NOT AT FIRST, AT LEAST AT A VERY EARLY PERIOD, SEEMS TO HAVE PREVAILED.

THE art of navigation, though both complicated and dangerous, appears not only to have been invented, but to have made some progress at a very early age of the world. Curiosity prompted some, ambition induced others, and the love of gain, with a force equal, if not superior to either, led many to trust themselves in a frail bark to a boisterous element, in pursuit of their respective enjoyments. The people that lived on the borders of the Mediterranean, and on the banks of the Red Sea, were the first that understood the nature, and courted the advantages of commerce. Their situation invited them to this species of industry. Among these, history informs us, that the Egyptians, soon after the establishment of their government, set the example, by opening a beneficial trade between India and the Arabian



Arabian Gulph ; whence the commodities were carried by land to the Nile, conveyed down that river to the Mediterranean, and thence transported to the European kingdoms.

But the soil of that country was so fertile, and its climate so mild, as to produce in plenty, not only the necessaries, but the luxuries of life : the manners of the people, and the genius of their religion, their institutions, and their laws, were of such a peculiar nature, as to render their commercial intercourse with strangers only of short duration. The Phenicians were different from them in many respects. Their territory was far from being either extensive or fertile ; they had no peculiarity in either their manners or institutions ; their superstition was neither of a gloomy nor unsocial nature ; so that, without scruple or reluctance, they could cordially engage in business with the nations around them. Trade was consequently the source of their opulence and of their power ; and they carried it on with more wisdom and more enterprise than any state in ancient times. Instead of confining their views, as the Egyptians had done, to India, Africa, and the Mediterranean, their spirit led them to take a wider range ; and, boldly sailing through the Straits of Hercules, they visited the western coasts of Africa and Spain ; and, having planted colonies in some of the places to which they resorted, introduced among them some acquaintance with their improvements and their arts.

Carthage, a shoot from that venerable stock, applied herself to navigation and commerce, with such a degree of spirit, ingenuity, and success, as to show that she had profited by the example, and was in noways inferior to the parent state. But, while Tyre and Sidon directed their attention chiefly towards the east and the south, from which such immense treasures have been constantly brought, Carthage, averse to interfere with the mother country, extended her navigation toward the west and the north, and, following the course which the parent state had taken, passed the Straits ; and, pushing their discoveries farther than any that had gone before them, visited not only the coasts of Spain and Africa, but those of Gaul and of Britain. In both the one and the other of these celebrated nations, commerce produced its ordinary effects. It expanded the minds of those by whom it was conducted ; it extinguished their prejudices ; it excited their curiosity, and in-  
flamed



flamed their desires for undertaking new enterprizes of a bold and hazardous kind. Hence, voyages were undertaken, however long and perilous, the object of which was to discover new countries, and to explore unknown seas; no less with a view to add to the stock of human knowledge, than to collect materials for increasing their commercial stores.

In some of these voyages of discovery, undertaken either by the spirited Greek colony at Marseilles \*, or the enterprising republic of Carthage, were the islands that encircle the coasts of Britain, it is probable, first made known. But though no such voyages had been undertaken, or no such discovery made, accident might have supplied the place of design, and the islands in question been discovered in voyages entered upon with more common views. Their ships, in trading voyages to the north, might have been either chased by pirates, then numerous, or driven by the force of weather far from their destined course, and, in this extremity, compelled to seek refuge in creeks and bays of islands which they had never before heard of, much less known. That no such discovery, whether by design or accident, has been mentioned in the annals of that period, is no conclusive argument against the truth of the supposition; for that prudent people, it is well known, carefully concealed their discoveries, partly from maxims of commercial policy, and partly from reasons of state.

Among them, however, as they were enlightened in other respects, there would be men of more liberal sentiments, who, by conversing familiarly with the navigators, would become acquainted with their discoveries; which, in spite of the narrow policy of their country, they would communicate to those Greeks and Romans † who had the same desire of knowledge with themselves. This is almost the only supposition on which we can account, in a way that is at all satisfactory, for the early mention that is made of these islands.

\* Pythias's Voyage of Discovery in the North, in Pliny.

† Agriculture and war were the only arts practised by the ancient Romans. Commerce was an ignoble profession, and consigned to slaves or freed-men. A stranger and an enemy were denoted by the same word in their language; and they betrayed no curiosity for the manners and institutions of foreign nations, unless they came into hostile contact with them, or had subdued them. In this event, they sold all who resisted as slaves, and compelled the remainder to adopt their own laws and institutions.—A bigotted attachment to their own customs, and a sovereign contempt for those of others, was a prominent feature in the character of the ancient Romans.—E.



But if some difficulties occur in our attempting to investigate the time when, and the people by whom they were at first discovered, we shall meet still more, in our endeavours to trace the origin of their name.

If the source from which the name of a province has been derived, could be ascertained with accuracy, it might tend sometimes to throw light on the condition of the inhabitants, and illustrate their customs and manners. In this point of view it becomes an object of importance, though involved in difficulties almost insurmountable, and discoverable very seldom either by record or tradition. The truth of this observation will readily be admitted. No wonder, therefore, if obstacles occur to render us unsuccessful, in accounting for the name of a remote sequestered province, situated in the track of piratical rovers from different nations, long speaking a foreign language, and almost as long subject to a foreign dominion.

In every point almost that respects Britain, or even her appendages, the Roman authors are not only the best, but almost the only source of information. The Greeks that went before them, and were their masters in every art, but the art of war, directed their attention to this object, by furnishing some light, though feeble and glimmering.

In illustration of this, it may be observed, that, so early as four hundred and fifty years before the Christian æra, the first writer of that famous nation, who undertook to record in prose the transactions of former times, has barely mentioned Britain under a name, that points at the commodities with which it was then understood most to abound \*. Long after him, another celebrated writer of the same nation is more explicit ; so much so, as to specify the form of the island, and is the very first author, whom we are acquainted with, who has mentioned by name any part of Scotland †.

Ante  
Christum  
450.

Ante  
Christum  
57.

Trusting no doubt to the information of the first Cæsar, with whom he was contemporary, or to what he had obtained from those settled in the Roman province in Gaul, who had carried on trade with the island, he tells us that Britain resembles Sicily, in having a triangular form, with three remarkable promontories, to each of which, in his own language, he has given a name. The only one that is necessary here to mention is Cape *Orcas*, by

\* Herod. Cassiterides.

† Diod. Siculus.

which



which must be meant either Dungsbay or Dunnethead, in Caithness, both of them in the extremity of the continent, and directly fronting the Orkney Isles. About a hundred years after the age of this author, these islands are mentioned for the very first time by the name of *Orcades*, an appellation which, in his language, they ever afterwards bore\*.

To account for this name, several languages have been applied to; some words tortured; many conjectures hazarded, and as many opinions formed. In order, no doubt, to compliment those among whom he lived, one author endeavours to persuade us, that it originates from the Gothic language, in which the word *ear* imports honour, and *kin* an offspring, as if the country took its name from the people, who are considered as a generation of honour†. Another, who is far better known, and whose merit is much more conspicuous, tells us, that it ought to be considered as coming from the old British word *ar* or *or*, that signifies over-against or opposite to; and *cat*, that implies the cape, or point of the Catti, or people of Caithness‡. A third, differing from both, contends for its derivation from the British word *or* or *gor*, which he takes in the same sense with the former; and *cad*, a promontory or headland: And thus both of these last authors concur in opinion, that they owe their name to their situation§. In this respect only we can agree with them; for, after every attention to the subject that it deserves, it appears most probable that Cape *Orcas*, to which they are directly opposite, must be referred to as giving birth to their name. Their own foreign historian, a man intimately acquainted with the different branches of the Gothic language, informs us, that in the old Danish, *Orca* signifies strength, from which the cape itself might have taken its name, as it consists of a huge impenetrable rock, that has had power to withstand the impetuous billows for numberless ages||. The same word, and perhaps for the very same reason, has been made use of, to distinguish a very large species of fish; and hence the greatest naturalist¶ of ancient times has, in his admirable work, bestowed the name of *Orca* on some of these huge marine animals. Tradition, to which we are sometimes compelled to have recourse for want

\* Pomp. Mela.

† Wallace.

‡ Camden's Britannia.

§ Baxter. Gloss. Ant. Brit.

|| Torſæus. *Orca*, lingua Danica, robur denotat.

¶ Pliny.



of better evidence, assures us, and, we apprehend, on good grounds, that in early times, much more than at present, whales of a vast size, and in great numbers, haunted both the north coasts of Scotland and the adjacent isles. If to this it be added, that in the *Norse* dialect, the words *ays* or *lys* correspond to the English word islands, the ancient name *Orcad-lys* or *Orcades*, may signify the islands opposite to, or off Cape *Orcas*. In support of this derivation, it may be still farther observed, that those who pretend to be best acquainted with the Celtic and Gotho-Celtic language, inform us, that the name by which in that language they are known, is equivalent to what in ours would imply the Islands of Whales. Even their number, which might be much more easily ascertained, has given scope to diversity of opinions. To show that this is the case, let it be observed, that while the first author that mentions them\* reckons them thirty, the second† extends them to forty, the third counts thirty again‡, and even a fourth and a fifth§ concur in opinion that thirty-three is their full amount||.

Tacitus, that consummate genius, who reflects so much honour on the place of his nativity, risks no opinion on this point, as an object either beneath his notice, or unsuitable to his situation and views. He mentions, however, what was of much more importance, that they were, for the first time, not only examined, and thoroughly known, but brought under subjection, in that notable expedition which Agricola, his illustrious relation, accomplished with such brilliant success. But, high as the reputation of this author stands, in consequence of the qualities which he has displayed, some objections, plausible at least, if not solid, might be made to his account. To what purpose, might it be said, does this profound historian advance such a paradox, as that these islands had not been known till that period, and how could such

\* Pomp. Mela. † Pliny. ‡ Ptolemy. § Oros. and Isidor.

|| Persons acquainted with the Gaëlic have assured us, that *Ork* means a whale, or large fish of a particular description. *Innis* means *islands*. Hence *Ork-innis*—*islands of whales*. This etymology is only offered as a conjecture; and it is probable that Pliny called these animals *Orca*, not because it was their appropriated name, but because he heard they abounded off Cape *Orcas*. Huge whales are often seen in the Pentland Frith to this day; and they were probably more numerous in ancient times. Hence they may have given rise to the name of the promontory, and of the islands, the sounds of which they frequented. It is not usual for men to name promontories from a retrospective consideration of their strength in resisting the billows; but from some obvious circumstance, that strikes the eye, and forces itself upon their attention.



an assertion be reconciled to truth\*? Had not his countrymen among them, ever since the days of the Carthaginians, traditions respecting the wonders of Thule †, and all its sister isles? Had not recent accounts from the north been circulated, which he must have heard? And, what he could not possibly be ignorant of, had not, at least, one poet and two philosophers, in their writings, taken some notice of these isles? To these questions, which involve difficulties less real than apparent, this answer may be given, that he was not a stranger to the notions that had long floated among his countrymen; much less was he ignorant of what had been published by their admired writers. But such was the penetration of his genius, his accurate precision, and, above all, his regard to veracity, that he could not consider any country as discovered, in the proper sense of the word, till explored by such of his countrymen as he could trust. That this is his meaning, will admit of no doubt; and the ordinary sense of the words, no less than the sententious mode of expression, will sufficiently warrant the explanation.

From the transient manner in which, to a superficial view, they seem to be mentioned, some have doubted whether the Roman fleet did not pass by, without entering into or touching at these islands; and, consequently, have considered this author's account of them, if not entirely, at least in a great measure, false or fabulous. But, to say nothing of the established character of the author, nor of the concise method in which, on every subject, he expresses his sentiments, this opinion will, for solid reasons, appear destitute of foundation. Had the Romans, in that expedition, cruised along the north coast, and, through the Pentland Frith, prosecuted their voyage westward, they could not, as the author informs us they did, have discovered Thule, which seems plainly to have been Fula, one of the nearest and highest of the Shetland islands. They could scarcely have entered the frith, but in the time of either flood or ebb. In the former, unable to stem the torrent, they would have been driven back with violence; and, in the latter, they must have been, in a very short time, carried through with the utmost rapidity. But neither in the one case nor the other, could there

\* Tacitus: Ac simul incognitas ad id tempus insulas quas Orcades vocant, invenit, domuitque.

† Pythias.



have been an opportunity for the author to make the observation which he has done, concerning the strange quality of the sea in that region, which could be nothing else than the tides, with which the Romans, accustomed only to the Mediterranean, were almost entirely unacquainted \*. Neither could that observation have been made, had they directed their course north, and passed between Orkney and Shetland, where it is well known that the tides, except near the land, are scarcely perceptible. But, had they shaped their course, some to the south, and some to the north, and some through the channels that intersect the islands in various directions, they would have met with tides to oppose their motion, some so strong, and others so gentle, as to furnish ground for that remark. In clear weather, they could have descried, at a distance, Thule or Fula, and withal discovered the north-east so distinctly, as to have known, for certain, Great Britain to be an island †.

To those who are acquainted with the moral and literary character of this most respectable writer, no doubt will remain, after his positive assertion that they were subdued, that the islands were at that time inhabited. In regard to this matter, his sagacity was sufficient to secure him against being imposed on himself. His probity deprived him of any inclination to impose on others, and it is impossible he could be mistaken; for if he was not in that expedition himself, (which is by no means certain,) he at least collected his information from the purest source, the most intelligent officers in the fleet, and the commander in chief in particular, with whom, according to his own account, he lived to the very last in terms of the most cordial familiarity.

To find therefore Solinus, an author of some merit, and one of his own countrymen, giving, in the face of such respectable authority, a different account as to this particular, cannot fail to excite astonishment. Had he lived, as was once believed, at an early period, there might have been some

\* Cæsar, Gal. Bel. *Nostrique id erat incognitum.*

† Major Moodie, of Melfetter, Orkney, has a brazen sword, of a particular composition, short, calculated to cut and thrust, and every way similar to those used by the Romans, which was found below a moss in one of the Shetland Islands. From this it would seem that the Romans had explored the Shetland as well as the Orkney Islands; though they do not seem to have retained a permanent possession of either. — E.



Anno  
Domini  
240.

ground for this difference of opinion; but, since his age has been ascertained by the ingenious researches of a modern antiquary \*, to be near the middle of the third century, this difference is almost inexplicable.

Strange as this may appear, he tells us gravely, that the islands in question were only three in number, uninhabited, destitute of woods, partly rough with rushes, and partly covered with rocks and with sand †.

Compared, indeed, with some of the islands of the Archipelago, or Ionian sea, that abound with whatever can gratify the senses or please the fancy, these may have a sterile appearance in the eye of cultivated man. But sterility in the abstract is by no means justly applicable to them, as appears evident from their soil being capable of producing not only grain of different kinds, but roots of various sorts, and of the best quality, as well as grasses natural and artificial: and even their want of wood must be understood with some limitation, since trees, in a half putrid state, are sometimes dug up in marshes, which show that they have not been always strangers to the country.

Neither can a barren sand be considered as characteristic of them, since only two or three, as has been already stated exhibit that appearance; and that too on a small part of their surface only: neither is the ground, in general, of such a nature as to foster rushes, even where the hand of industry has not as yet made any impression: nor are rocks any where, except a very few in one or two places, to be seen scattered over the surface of these islands. But if the latter part of the description be discordant with appearances, and in nowise applicable, what can be advanced in favour of the former, that represents them only as three in number, and as affording, at that period, no habitation for men?

Though this author, for the most part, follows a great master ‡, to whose excellent work he has made some additions, in this instance he has left him, and consequently wandered from the truth; for his confining their number to three, in contradiction to those writers who had gone before him,

\* Mr. Pinkerton.

† Solinus: Numero tres, vacant homine, non habent silvas, tantum juncis herbis inhorrescunt, cætera earum nudæ arenæ et rupes tenent.

‡ Pliny's Geography.



must invalidate his credit in asserting that they were not inhabited, even though he had not been opposed by such respectable authority.

But, setting authority aside altogether, there are not wanting reasons to induce a belief that they were inhabited at the time they are first mentioned by any Roman author.

The number which the group is said to contain, not only by Pomponius Mela, but by those that succeeded him, is, if we consider those that are inhabited only, wonderfully near the truth; and the only reason that can be assigned for this number being specified rather than any other, must have been, that such as were inhabited might be distinguished from such as were not; since the whole number amounts to upwards of sixty.

Moreover, it is presumed they must have been inhabited before their number could be easily or distinctly known: for they are so intimately connected, so interwoven, and, if we may so speak, blended together, that scarcely any person could enumerate them accurately, but one who had, for some length of time, resided in the country. No freebooter, or piratical rover, who had touched here; no trading ship, that had taken refuge in some of their harbours; no tribe of barbarians, resorting hither from the opposite shores for the temporary amusement of hunting or fishing, could ever, it is probable, have furnished such an exact account of their numbers as we find recorded in ancient writers.

Thus, though there seems to be sufficient evidence that they were peopled early, (as soon, perhaps, if not sooner, than the Romans became acquainted with Britain), there appears to be none of such weight as to determine our opinion with respect to the precise time when that event took place. A very early period, indeed, is assigned for it, by their own historian, who states, from authorities which he had collected, and on which he seems to have relied, that they were discovered nearly four, and inhabited two hundred and sixty years before the nativity of Jesus Christ\*.

\* Torfæus, a native of Iceland, and historiographer to the King of Denmark, who, from authentic records in that country, and Icelandic manuscripts and Sagas, composed, in Latin, a history of the Orkney Isles. He was noted for talents and literature, no less than for integrity; wrote about 1690, and died 1720, aged 81 years.



In whatever light we regard this matter, we may be allowed to conjecture, that they did not remain unoccupied, after the peopling of the countries around them. This is rendered the more probable from modern discoveries, in which islands have been found inhabited, at an immense distance from any continent, even in the very infancy of navigation\*. Situated as they are, on the north borders of Scotland, at no great distance from the Scandinavian shores, and directly in the course of ships traversing these regions, it is impossible to suppose that they would long escape the attention, or elude the avarice, of man. Among the ancients, an opinion was pretty generally entertained, by the learned as well as the unlearned, that in the first ages of the world men were, by some strange prolific virtue in the earth, produced, like plants, from the ground on which they lived. Hence many of them are found assuming the appellation of Sons of the Earth. Even the Athenians themselves, who ranked high among nations, not only for the originality of their genius, and the elegance of their taste, but for the progress they had made in science, and their political wisdom, had the weakness to glory in the name of *Autochthones*, as if it had been more honourable to spring, like mushrooms, from the soil of Achaia, than to derive their origin from the most celebrated people around them. The same silly conceit seems to have prevailed among the Romans: In proof of this, Cæsar, whose writings reflect on him much more honour than all his conquests, in mentioning the two races of people whom he met with on his arrival in Britain, considers those who inhabited the maritime parts as having emigrated from Belgic Gaul, while he represents those that occupied the interior district as so entirely different, as to have sprung up like the grass in the island itself. Tacitus, too, with all the vigour of his intellect, and notwithstanding his profound knowledge, seems to have entertained the same opinion; for, in the introduction to his accurate and beautiful description of the manners of the Germans, he thus forcibly expresses himself: ‘What man could think of leaving Africa, Asia, or Italy, and, after exposing himself to the perils of a terrible and unknown sea,

\* Cooke's Voyages.



‘ resolve to settle in Germany, a region where the ground makes a dismal appearance, where the climate is bad, where agriculture will not reward industry, and where every thing must be disagreeable to the eye, unless it happen to be one’s own country !’ This is the argument with which he attempts to prove, that the first inhabitants of Germany could come from no other place, but were *aborigenes, indigenæ*, or, in other words, the natural and spontaneous production of the soil of that country. Did we adopt the same opinion with regard to the first peopling of countries, a similar argument might be used for the aborigines of Orkney, with perhaps still greater propriety. But dismissing such an idle notion, as equally repugnant to good sense, the principles of sound philosophy, and the dictates of genuine religion, to me it seems most probable that these islands were first peopled from the north of Scotland.

But before they became a permanent habitation, it is natural to suppose that they would occasionally furnish an asylum to pirates, for which they are admirably calculated, not more on account of their situation, and the excellence of their harbours, than of the vast numbers of birds and fishes which they produce. That they were actually, for some time, used for this purpose, history gives us some information \*. The vicinity rendered it probable, that their first permanent inhabitants came from the nearest southern coast ; and to people in a certain state of society they could not fail to afford a very alluring prospect indeed. If they were in the first stage, when subsistence is procured by hunting and fishing, accident or curiosity would bring them hither ; and as soon as they had made trial of their excellence for these invaluable purposes, they would henceforth discover little inclination to leave them.

But suppose they had got beyond this stage, and made some progress in civilization, still those pursuits, which had once been their business, would continue to be their amusement ; and in order to show their skill and their dexterity, their fortitude in bearing pain, and their courage in encountering dangers, they would, in that condition, as readily seize the islands. At first, perhaps, they would cross the frith in small numbers, and take possession of

\* Torfæus.



the lands that were next them. Every large island, it is probable, would receive and accommodate a distinct tribe; this they would hunt on and fish around; pasture, and in time cultivate and defend, and consider as their own. Here, for some time, they would live in the enjoyment of peace, and in liberty as extensive as their hearts could wish; till some turbulent spirit arose to disturb the general tranquillity. In no state are the irregular passions of men long in repose. Ambition would fire some; interest would soon excite others; and differences, which among a rude people, are always violent, would arise, that could not be settled without an appeal to judicial authority. To terminate these disputes, therefore, to decide these differences, they would find themselves under the necessity of having recourse to the election of judges; and for that important office, their choice would naturally fall on such as were most distinguished for their age, their experience, their integrity, and their wisdom. To them afterwards would every matter in dispute be referred; their award, if founded in justice, would be held sacred; and the reputation and influence which they would thus acquire, would raise them to a rank in the society that would entitle them to preside in the assemblies of the people, and always to direct, and even sometimes to dictate, their determinations.

But not only would differences and disputes arise among individuals of the same tribe, but dissensions would soon spring up between tribes themselves. If the inhabitants of one island were in more favourable circumstances than those of another; if they were better situated for the chase; if their fishing ground were better; if they had more convenient houses, or more fertile fields; these advantages would kindle envy in the breasts of those to whose lot the less favoured island had fallen. Inflamed with a desire to possess those conveniencies which they saw others enjoy, and listening more to the voice of glory than the dictates of justice, which, in that state, often meets with but too little regard, they would soon resolve, by force of arms, to wrest these objects of their affection from the hands of their more fortunate neighbours. Aggression and defence would now make their respective preparations; and war, the disgrace, as well as the scourge of mankind, would arise; to conduct which, leaders would be chosen; of whom, the wisest or the most daring, the most powerful or the most fortunate, would,



would, in the end, obtain the victory. As soon as the ardour of their passions had cooled, the vanquished would unite with the victorious, in order to compose a more formidable band, on purpose to invade and conquer some other adjacent isle, which, by their combined force, they would soon accomplish; and, gathering strength from the accession of numbers as they advanced, they would spread terror around them, and in the course of a few years subject the whole of the islands to their dominion. The leader of such a victorious band, in whatever sphere he had formerly moved, or by whatever name he was now distinguished, as he had been so fortunate as to conduct those to glory whom he had been raised to command, would be in fact invested with the powers of royalty.

These are no ideal steps; for they are the result of principles deep-laid in the human frame; and the progress from families to tribes, and from tribes to communities, under able and successful chieftains, to the final establishment of monarchy, may be distinctly traced in the primitive history of several nations.

These progressive steps in a colony, however, rest on a supposition, that the country from which they emigrated was in a rude state; ignorant, in a great measure, of the blessings of a regular government and established laws, and strangers to the arts of life; which, with respect to the first inhabitants of these islands, unless they came over at a very early period, could not well be the case.

The Píks, or Pícts, who have been the subject of much ingenious and learned controversy, were, as it now appears evident\*, a people of ancient Scandinavia; who, long before the Nativity, issued in numbers from their forests, and from their lakes; embarked all they possessed, and committed themselves to the mercy of the waves; and having sailed westward, took possession of the Hæbudæ; from which, in a few generations, they spread themselves over a great part of Scotland. In process of time, the different tribes that composed that numerous and warlike people, were happily united in the bonds of civil union, under kings whom they themselves made choice of, and tasted the sweets of order and subordination; and they had

\* Mr. Pinkerton's Introd. and Mallet's North. Antiq.



probably arrived at this stage of improvement, when the islands first became inhabited \*.

As

\* It must be owned that Mr. Pinkerton, whom our author implicitly follows, in accounting for the first peopling of the northern parts of this kingdom, has accumulated much learned quotation on the subject. But we apprehend a question of this sort may admit of a more easy solution by a reference to the names of places, and monuments of antiquity in a country, than by appealing to the opinions of authors who wrote only from hearsay, and had no opportunities of acquiring authentic information.—In the account our author here gives of the emigration of the Picts, or Picts, it appears strange that they should pass by the Shetland and Orkney Islands, and the north of Scotland, which lay directly in their route: That they should land first in the Hebudæ, and from thence spread themselves eastward and northward, until they at last returned and occupied the Orkneys. It does not seem probable that the Scandinavians could construct vessels capable of such a voyage; or could navigate them after they were constructed, until by the gradual progress of the Carthaginian voyages toward the north, they had acquired some knowledge of navigation, and of naval architecture.

The more natural supposition is, that the first inhabitants of Britain came from the opposite coast of Gaul, where the British shore would be constantly in their view, and would naturally excite a desire to explore the country. It is even possible that the first settlers may have advanced into this country before the sea was interposed between Dover and Calais. Living by hunting, and the spontaneous productions of the earth, a great extent of land could only maintain a very few people. Swarm following swarm, they would advance until they found their progress checked by the surrounding ocean; and they would at last feel the necessity of betaking themselves to pasturage and agriculture. As the knowledge of navigation extended northward, other settlers would pass over from the more distant shores of Germany, and, at last, of Scandinavia; and would either form distinct colonies, or incorporate with the original inhabitants.

Cæsar found the Belgæ in the south-eastern districts of Britain; though they do not seem to have been of old standing in the island. It is probable that those whom he calls *natos in insula ipsa*, were Celtæ, or of Gallic extraction, who had first peopled the island. The Belgæ seem to have expelled the Celtæ from districts on the coast, as they had expelled their countrymen from part of Gaul. There is no evidence, from authentic history, of any great body of Gothic extraction, besides the Belgæ, whose extraction is doubtful, having passed over to Britain, until the Saxons were invited to defend the Britons, about A. D. 450.

But the question recurs—Who were the Picts?—the Caledonians?—and the Scots?—

The Roman writers uniformly describe the inhabitants of this island as *Picti Britanni*. The practice of making indelible marks on their skin, seems every way similar to tattooing, which still prevails among many barbarous nations. Its object is thought to have been to render them terrible in battle. But the controul of necessity seems first to have suggested the practice: for before they had invented warm houses and clothing, pricking, and rubbing in the astringent juices of plants, thickened and hardened the skin, and rendered it insensible to the severities of the weather.

Wherever the Romans extended their power, they discouraged this and similar practices, and obliged their subjects to adopt their own language, dress, and manners.—Hence a new distinction would arise between the *Picti* and *non Picti Britanni*. Picti, or Picts, would become a term of reproach among the provincial Britons, equivalent to savage or barbarous: while those who continued to resist the Roman arms, would glory in the practice as a mark of independence and adherence to ancient usages. As the Roman arms advanced northward, it is probable many would

retreat



As monarchy naturally implies nobility, as a link in the chain of society, to unite the highest with the lower ranks, some man of rank and fortune would arise, that would cast a wishful eye on the *North*; and when his ambition

retreat before them, and join those tribes that had not yet encountered their power. Hence we do not hear of Picts as a national name, until the Roman conquests met with an effectual resistance in the north, and a permanent line was drawn between the *più* and *non più Britanni*.—Though Agricola pushed his advanced posts as far as Ross-shire, the Romans were not able to keep any permanent possession of the country beyond the Friths of Forth and Clyde: and were sometimes driven within the Friths of Solway and Tyne.

The question respecting the Caledonians is more easily solved.—These were evidently what the Highlanders, who live among the mountains, call themselves, at this day, when they mean to discriminate between those of their race who live in vallies—They were *Gaël-Dun*—*Gauls of the mountains*.—G, in Gaelic, is pronounced very like K,—and the Romans, by adding their feminine termination, made up the word Caledonia.

Thus the Caledonians were the Gaël who inhabited the mountains; and implied that there were also Gaël who inhabited the plains. The word implied no more than the distinction known at this day, between Highlanders and Lowlanders.

That the Picts were tribes of the Gaël, or Celts, who inhabited the eastern and more level parts of the country, appears from the numerous names of places, in every district, evidently of Gaelic origin.—From favourable situation, and the resort of strangers, they seem early to have understood, and to have practised agriculture; while their neighbours, the Gaël-Dun, depended chiefly on pasturage and hunting.—It farther appears that the word Pict was originally a term of reproach, from this circumstance, that no such term was ever applied to them by the Gaël-Dun. The name by which the Picts were known among the Gaël, and by which their monuments are characterised to this day, is that of *Drinnach*, labourers; alluding to their agricultural operations.

Our historians, who attempt to trace the origin of the Scottish and Pictish monarchies to a remote antiquity, seem to expatiate in the regions of conjecture. It seems more probable that the tribes inhabiting different districts, continued long independent of each other; and that the Roman invasion first suggested the necessity of uniting under a common chief, to repel the common danger, and paved the way for the gradual establishment of hereditary monarchy, and general government. There is reason to believe that there were several petty monarchies, both of the Picts and Caledonians, before either of these districts were united under one head.

That the first inhabitants of Orkney, whom the Norwegians extirpated, had come from Caithness, we agree with our author in thinking extremely probable. Now the three northern counties of Scotland were then, and, excepting a few districts around the coast of Caithness, are at this day occupied by a Celtic tribe who call themselves Cattich, Catts, and their country Cattay, who then made a part of the northern kingdom of the Picts. After the Norwegians got possession of the Orkneys, they called the sea which separated them from the mainland the Pitland Frith, and the country on the south of it Cattness, i. e. the Nose or promontory of the Catti. When they got possession of Caithness, they called the country beyond it Suderland; from which the county of Sutherland derives its modern name. But we have already stated that the Gaël make no use of these names to this day.—Sutherland they call Cattay, themselves Cattich; and Caithness, a more level district, they call Golin, and the people Golic. If any farther evidence were necessary to establish the identity of origin of the Picts and Caledonians, it might be stated that St. Columba, who was an Irish Celt, and the apostle of the Highlands and Isles, is not stated to



ambition had been blasted at home, or his interest had suffered from the success of a more fortunate rival, form in his own mind the scheme of migration. Ruffled with his disappointment, on the one hand, and elated with the

have used an interpreter while he laboured to convert the northern Picts, and preached the Gospel to great multitudes.

It therefore appears abundantly evident, that the Picts and Caledonians were tribes of the Gaël, or Celts; the first inhabiting the more level parts of the country, the second the mountainous regions.

With regard to the Scots there is still more difficulty. Our early historians, misled by Monkish legends, have told many romantick stories, of their coming from Troy, or Egypt; of their landing in Galicia in Spain, or in Portugal: where having fought a great many battles, and encountered a sufficient number of extraordinary adventures; all at once, without any apparent reason, they adopted the whim of removing to Ireland.—There, having encountered a competent number of similar adventures; with equal inconstancy and greater folly, they afterwards removed to the barren shores of Argyleshire. Our historians have now only to compound a certain proportion of wisdom in their leaders, with valour in the people, to enable them to establish the kingdom of Scotland.

But if these migrations of the Scots had a real existence, it must appear very strange that no vestige of a tradition, respecting their Irish extraction, ever existed among the Gaël of Argyleshire, or any where else among the Highlanders.—On the contrary, these Gaël, though they admit the native Irish to be of the same race with themselves, allege that the Irish derived their descent from them, not they from the Irish. We would expect that the name Scot should be familiar in the districts where it first acquired an establishment. But, unfortunately, the Gaël never heard of such a name, and make no use of it to this day. They call their country *Alabin*, Albion, and themselves Gaël Albinich, Gauls of Albion; to distinguish them from the Gaël of Ireland, and other places. The people of the low country they call *Sassanoch*, Saxons; which shews they esteem them a different race from the *Drinnach*, or antient Picts.

It is true the Gaël both of Scotland and Ireland, speak the same language, and were long united in alliance, and habits of intercourse with each other. Their union was doubtless cemented by a sense of common danger: for first the Romans, then the Scandinavians, and lastly, the English were the enemies of both. Though they assisted each other in their wars, it does not follow that the Scotch Highlanders derive their origin from the Irish.

The word *Scot*, or *Scuit*, means a wanderer who lives by rapine, or, in modern phrase, a *highwayman*. It seems to have been a term of reproach, thrown out by the provincial Britons, against those fierce tribes who, after the decline of the Roman power, harassed them by their merciless incursions. But as the party reproached are often disposed to glory in what their opponents reckon their shame, the term seems to have been adopted as a title of honour, and its use to have gradually extended, until it became the name of a kingdom.—In later times we have an example similar to this, of the term Scot becoming the cognomen of a gang of border thieves.—What antiquaries have stated concerning an antient tribe of Scots in Ireland, establishes no presumption that our Scots derived either their name, or their descent from them. That there might be robbers in Ireland, known by their proper Celtic name, as well as in this country, does not seem at all improbable.

These circumstances induce a belief that the original inhabitants of this country, as well as the *Peti* and *Papæ* of the Orkneys, were different tribes of the Gaël, or *Fletæ*. That the word Picts was at first a term of reproach among the Romans and provincial Britons, and did not become a national



the hopes of extending his power, or augmenting his wealth, on the other, he would lose no time to communicate his intention to his friends and retainers, and invite them to share in the project, which in that age of adventure they were not likely long to decline. Embarkation would soon follow; the possession of the new territory would be the immediate consequence; and the adventurer would fix his residence in some convenient spot, where, at a distance from his own country, he might venture to call those in his train his subjects, to whom he might prescribe rules of behaviour, and manage them with a power, extensive, and almost uncontrouled. As long as he understood rightly the nature of his station, and made no abuse of his power; while he conducted himself suitably to his dignity, and, by the vigour of his administration, and the wisdom of his laws, in conjunction with his own exemplary conduct, promoted the interest of his little community, he would enjoy the situation to which his good fortune had raised him, in equal honour and peace. But as soon as he forgot the intention for which all government was instituted, and wantonly trampled on the rights of the people, and, in the prosecution of what he falsely considered his own interest, indulged his avarice and ambition, he would no longer be regarded with any degree of respect; love would yield to resentment, and obedience to opposition; and the people, like their countrymen on the continent, would degrade him; and, in his room, elect a chief, to fill that station which he had occupied and abused.

For some time at least, little kings, or princes, seem to have swayed the sceptre over these islands; but, whether independent entirely, or tributary to those in the mother country, is a matter that, for want of evidence, admits of no certain determination. Even the very existence of some of them depends on authority that is doubtful. This may be said with respect to him that has been named Belus, though mentioned by ancient writers. His name is also still to be seen, cut on a stone in the church of Birfa; and an

national name until after the progress of the Roman arms met an effectual check. That Caledonians was the name assumed by those tribes which inhabited the mountains: and as we do not hear of Scots until after the decline of the Roman power, it was first a term of reproach, and was afterwards adopted as the name of a nation.

The conclusions resulting from the monuments these people have left, shall be afterwards stated.—E.

author



author who, at least in one respect, has reflected the greatest honour on his country, tells us, that this Orcadian monarch armed his subjects, (but on what pretence is not said), and, marching to the south, ravaged the counties through which he went; and having reached the place where the Scottish monarch was, very unseasonably interrupted the joy of his marriage feast\*. The sovereign, and those that were with him on the occasion, taking the alarm, in a moment rushed to arms, and, falling on these audacious strangers, put them all to the sword; and their king Belus, expecting no quarter, laid violent hands on himself.

Neither does the existence of King Gaius rest on a firmer foundation. This petty sovereign, some authors inform us, engaged in a war with the Romans, that proved unsuccessful; and, being taken prisoner, was, A. Dom. 43. with his wife and children, carried to Rome, to grace the triumph of the Emperor †.

It is to the conquest of them on this occasion that the Roman satirist is supposed to allude ‡. But neither the vague flourish of a poet, who both takes, and is allowed great liberty, with regard to facts; nor the bare assertion of the historian, can prove the existence of any such war, in opposition to the direct authority of that most respectable writer, whose works have already been so often quoted §.

Another king, named Gunnas, is also mentioned; who, with five others, was summoned at once to appear before the great King Arthur, at his court in Britain ||.

If the existence of these princes were more probable in itself, and supported on better authority, it would be somewhat confirmed, from the islands being of old considered in the light of an ancient kingdom. That they were so, appears in the division of the Roman empire, among the sons of Constantine; when not only Britain, Gaul, and Spain, but also Orkney, fell to the lot of young Constantine; and its being classed with places of such note, points out at least the idea that was then entertained of its consequence.

\* Buchan. Hist. Scot.

† Eutrop. Bede. Boeth.

‡ Juvenal: Littora Juverna promovimus et modo captas Orcades, &c.

§ Tacitus.

|| Geoffrey of Monmouth, a very fabulous author.



To these authorities, lame and feeble as they are, some additional weight will be given, when they are considered in conjunction with one, which displays a degree of force that entitles it to notice.

The Picts, while they inhabited Caledonia, consisted of two grand divisions, the one occupying the south, and the other the north; in each of which they had a capital, the seat of their respective governments. The Grampian hills seem to have been the line of partition between them, over which they never passed to one another; for though they were evidently the same people, as having the same distinctive features, language, customs, and manners, there seemed to have been no other connexion whatever between them. Christianity first dawned on those that lived in the south, by means of the pious exertions of St. Ninian, who was a Cambro-Briton, and Bishop of Candida Casa, or Whithem, in the province of Valencia, or shire of Galloway \*. A.D. 412.

Nearly a century and a half later, St. Columba, a monk of Irish extraction, laboured in planting the seeds of the same system among those that inhabited the north; and what contributed much to his success, was, the good fortune he had to prevail with their king, Budi the Second, to become a convert, and receive from his hands the sacrament of baptism †. A.D. 565.

During the saint's residence at that prince's court, his biographer‡, whose veracity may be relied on, informs us, that there was, in his palace, a petty king of Orkney, whose name he does not mention; but to whom he recommended one of his disciples, of the name of Cormac, who, some time afterwards, with a view to instruct the people, visited his dominions.

This might have been a prince in alliance with that monarch, to whose court he had come to negotiate; or he might have been a tributary, who had delivered hostages, as a security for his continuing subject; which his own circumstances, or those of his country, might have rendered necessary.

The great distance at which the islands lay from the seat of the Pictish government, to say nothing of the mountains, fastnesses, and friths that intervened, would make them sometimes presume to shake off the yoke, or renounce the alliance which they had formed with the country on which

\* The venerable Bede.

† Adamnan, vit. St. Col. Bede. Chron. Pict.

‡ Adamnan.



they were dependent, or from which they had come. Accordingly, we are informed, that in the reign of Budi the Fourth, a violent insurrection broke out; which so inflamed the resentment of that monarch, that he ravaged the islands, in order to curb their licentious spirit, which had exceeded all bounds; and, by this well-timed severity, taught them the danger of violating their faith, or yielding to the imperious dictates of ambition. Instructed by experience, they seem to have remained quiet, and either enjoyed their independence, or observed the stipulated submission, as no mention is made of them, so far as can be traced, from this period, for the space of more than two hundred years.

During this long interval, they no doubt made improvements in the arts of peace; keeping pace, in some measure, with the people from whom they were descended, and from whom they received not only their language, but their particular institutions, their customs, and their manners. Their inhabiting a cluster of islands, very different, both in extent and fertility, from one another; their manner of life (chiefly subsisting by fishing), and above all, their being in the way of naval adventurers from various quarters, must in the lapse of time, have given birth to several peculiarities. Still their distinctive features, both as to mind and body, would continue the same; many of their native habits and customs would be retained, after what had originally given cause to them had ceased; inasmuch, that there could be no difficulty in recognizing the character of the colony in that of the parent state.

If, therefore, a few important facts could be collected from respectable authorities, they might have some tendency to explain what has sometimes been reckoned singular in the names of men and places, and in some customs and practices not elsewhere generally to be found; and also to account for, and illustrate some ancient monuments, that must be referred to these early inhabitants of the islands.



## CHAPTER II.

## OF THE MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF THE PICTS.

THE practice of exposing children in infancy, though followed by some celebrated nations of antiquity, and even by some of equal celebrity in modern times, is so repugnant to the feelings of humanity, that it is truly wonderful that, in any country, it should ever have taken place. Wisdom, virtue, religion, and natural affection, join in condemning it. Though, therefore, it was practised among the Caledonians, previously to the light of Christianity, it seems only to have been very seldom, and in cases of extreme necessity.

Births.

As soon as their children were born, they carried them to some lake or stream, into which they instantly immersed them, giving them at the same time a name; and this custom they regarded as a religious rite, because among them waters were considered sacred.

To establish the connexion between the sexes, on principles that are at once consonant to sound policy, and to purity of manners, has been found a very difficult task, in all ages; and therefore it need not seem strange, if, among a barbarous people, it should have been loose and irregular. Accordingly, the Caledonians (whom we consider as Picts), we are told, had a plurality, if not a community of wives\*. The same thing is asserted of the South Britons†, and of the Agathusi, a German nation‡; but it is probable this custom prevailed only among men of high rank, who might have observed it, from the love of vanity, or, as is the case in the east, from ostentation. To this opinion we are led, from the information that the Germans, except such as were rich, had never more than one wife, which is certainly most consonant both to nature and reason§; and the Picts seem evidently to have adopted the same wise and virtuous practice; for their kings only were permitted the privilege of choosing whom they

Marriages.

\* Dio.

† Julius Cæsar.

‡ Herodotus.

§ Tacitus.



pleased, and dismissing them again at pleasure\*. Their marriages were neither celebrated in any place of worship, nor attended with any religious ceremony, as they were regarded only in the light of a civil contract, not only then, but even so late as the commencement of the thirteenth century †. After the parties were finally agreed, the bridegroom offered a present to the bride's father; the bride did the same to her intended husband's father; the friends of both were invited to witness the agreement: when they had done this, the bride was given away in a set form of words; and the marriage feast closed the ceremony.

**Burials.** Their mode of interment was various. The bodies of the common people, and also those of their enemies, were in general buried, as the least troublesome and least expensive. Those of men of rank and eminence were for the most part burnt, either entirely or in part; and when this method, which was reckoned the most honourable, was adopted, the ashes were collected in an earthen urn, which was set on the ground, and over it was thrown a heap of earth, or *tumulus*, which in size was proportioned to the dignity of the deceased.

**Meat.** The food of these people, as might naturally have been expected, was very simple: milk and fish were the ordinary diet of such as lived in the western isles ‡; to which the flesh of such animals as the chase procured, was added by those who inhabited Pictland.

Besides all these kinds of food, they made use of a certain root, that had the power of preserving them long from the sensation of hunger; and the very same root, for the same purpose, was made use of by the ancient Scythians §. But pork was the favourite meat of that people; and boars' flesh was admitted to the honour of forming a dish among those that composed the feast of *Odin*. In the first accounts of Iceland, mention is often made of vast numbers of swine and sheep ||; and horse-flesh was used there, and in Scandinavia, the mother country, as late as the eleventh century.

**Drink.** Simple as their food was, their drink was not less so. Rarely did either wine or mead enter into their beverage. Ale was the favourite liquor with

\* Solinus.

† Pope Innocent the Third, 1210. Blackstone.

‡ Solinus.

§ Dio.

|| Islands Landaman Bok.



all the branches of the Gothic stock; and this they were accustomed, at their convivial meetings and festivals, to quaff liberally in horns \*, after the manner of the ancient Germans †.

Their dress was similar, in its nature, to the means of their subsistence. Dress. Many of the lower classes went almost entirely naked; and such as did not, had only the skins of wild beasts, which success in the chase had provided, carelessly thrown over their shoulders, to shield them from the violent blasts of winter ‡.

As early as the fifth century, the common people §, no less from a regard to decency, than for warmth, wore a cloth around their middle, while their chiefs had a coat and breeches under their mantle; and all of them stained or painted their bodies, in compliance with a custom which they had in common with the other branches of that great family.

To imprint these marks, or that colour on their skin, they made use of a sharp instrument, with which they punctured it; and when once this was done, they rubbed or pressed into it, some colouring substance, which, in a short time, rendered the place to which it was applied permanently conspicuous. *Vitrum*, or woad, was the substance used for this purpose among the Belgæ, who are not without several marks of a Gothic origin; and the application of it imparted to their skin a blue colour. Among them, the custom seems to have been prevalent, till compelled to give way to Roman manners; and some faint traces of it may be met with among the inhabitants of Northumberland so late as the eighth century. But this practice, far from being confined to the different tribes of one people, seems, in an early stage of society, to be of very wide extension; as we find it among the savages that roam through the wilds of America, and those that inhabit the islands in the Pacific Ocean, as well as among our European ancestors, in a similar condition ||.

If we trust the accounts of some writers, who are carried away with the Houses. force of a lively imagination, caves by the sea-shore, and rocks and dens in the forest, were the primitive habitations of men. In the cold regions of the north, however, houses of some kind or other must have been coeval

\* Adamnan, vit. St. Col.

† Cæsar.

‡ Cæsar, and Tacitus.

§ Gildas.

|| Robertson's America.

Cook's and Forster's Voyages.



with the first inhabitants, who, without such accommodation, could not have borne the severity of the winter. Through all Europe, the peasants, at least, had houses built of wood. The Picts had theirs of the same perishable materials; and, instead of being raised high, they were confined to the ground floor, in which there were several apartments intended to accommodate the two sexes respectively \*. The middle or principal part of the house formed the hall for entertainments, along the sides of which were placed benches for the guests to sit on †; and, in the centre of each range, stood an elevated seat, or chair of honour, for the reception of such persons as were of more than ordinary rank or dignity. The floor of the hall, on these occasions, was covered with straw, to serve as a carpet; and, in the middle of it, was a large fire, near which stood a large vessel full of ale; out of which their horns, or drinking vessels, were filled occasionally. The German houses seem to ‡ have been constructed in the same form, and of the same rude materials; of wood, without tyles, and without mortar §; but some of them were plastered with an earth so pure, and at the same time so splendid, that they had, in some degree, the appearance of being painted ||. This custom of ornamenting their houses continued to a late period; and the substance made use of for that purpose, had the name given it of *roth erde*, or red earth; and *Englische erde*; because it either was, or was supposed to have been, brought from that country ¶. These houses, the ruins of which are so frequently met with in the north, cannot, as some have imagined, be the first rude attempts to obtain more substantial abodes, as they seem totally unfit for ordinary habitations.

Business.

To a people, ignorant almost of manufactures of every sort, who as yet had conceived no idea of commerce, and who were scarcely acquainted with the rudiments of agriculture, there could be scarcely any employment but either those of hunting and fishing, or of rearing and pasturing some domestic animals. Thus did they procure food, and such simple articles of clothing as might serve them occasionally for use, or for ornament; and, when to these they were so fortunate as to add a temporary hut, to guard

\* Cheffels, Antiq. Ger.

† Gunlang's Saga.

‡ Tacitus.

§ Herodian.

|| Tacitus.

¶ Cheffels, Antiq. Ger.

them



them from the inclemency of the weather, they were contented, as having almost every thing which they desired, in their possession.

Among a people in a rude state, little regard is commonly paid to amusements of any kind, except gaming; which, however strange it may appear, is universal\*, and often prosecuted with a degree of ardour that proves as pernicious as in more polished society. The game in which the Goths took the greatest pleasure was chess; a game that requires no less judgment than perseverance; and, what shows their good sense, this was the favourite amusement in most of their colonies and possessions. In Iceland, a branch from that stem, it was practised with much avidity; for, in the eleventh century, we are told, that, while a celebrated poet was engaged in a game at chess with the beautiful Helga, his brother poet became so enamoured of that lady, that they quarrelled, fought, and fell, by mutual wounds, in the conflict†. Neither do they seem, even in that state, to have been insensible to the pleasures of conversation. Their minds were somewhat opened; and, when they met, they amused themselves with discoursing on the heroic deeds of their ancestors, and other men of eminence; with proposing and solving riddles, and with vying with one another in composing short pieces of poetry. Fond of news to excess, they eagerly sought intelligence from every quarter; which was a luxury so great, that the rich only were permitted to taste of it in the first instance: and such was the confidence which they put in the information thus received, that it sometimes had much influence in directing their councils. The same extravagant passion for news marked the character of the ancient inhabitants of Gaul‡, some of whom were originally descended from the Goths or Germans§.

This people, ignorant as they were of letters, and having priests of a foreign nation down to so late a period as the twelfth century, could have very few of the arts among them; and those must have been of a kind that was most simple and necessary. The preparation of their food and clothing, and the building of their houses, whatever was their matter or form, required

\* Tacitus. Robertson's America.

† Gunlang's Saga.

‡ Cæsar's Commentaries.

§ Cæsar, de Bello Gallico.



some acquaintance with such as were of that nature ; and, besides these, they must have had some little skill in the construction of canoes, or small vessels, and in managing them in such a manner as to transport themselves from one place to another. In every part of the earth, situated favourably for that purpose, such a degree, at least, of this wonderful art has been found ; and the sea, which, at first sight, might seem to have been intended to separate, for ever, tribes and nations, has, by the wisdom of Providence, been rendered the grand medium for establishing an easy and expeditious communication among mankind. As they were a brave and warlike people, self-preservation, no less than the love of conquest, must have led them early to form weapons of defence and attack ; and these, with them, were, as in other early nations, made of brass instead of iron, which seems to have been at first either less common or less understood \*. Their chariots, too, in which they fought, at an early period had, it is likely, brass in their construction ; and were made in such a manner, as implied some little notion of the mechanical arts.

The light of science never dawned among that people ; which is justly matter of surprise ; since their ancestors, on the Continent, had both philosophers and astronomers, and had a name among nations for that genuine wisdom, which is the only foundation of both science and art †. But particular circumstances, and not their want of capacity, was the cause of their ignorance ; and this might have even been perpetuated by their acknowledged vigour of mind, which might have discovered to them the futility of what, in those days, was dignified with the name of erudition. In the fine arts of poetry and music, nations have sometimes arrived at no small degree of excellence, even in an early, rude, or unpolished state. The case seems to have been very different with regard to the Picts ; among whom we have no evidence that these ever prevailed, if the war song be excepted, and the shouts of the soldiers, as they advanced in array to meet their foes in the field ‡. But for this deficiency, which may seem surprising, the parent state and the sister colonies made ample amends. So enthusiastically fond

\* Mr. Pinkerton's Introduction to the History of Scotland.

† Herodotus.

‡ Tacitus de Moribus German.



were they of poetry in particular, that to compose verse in all its varieties, and to acquire skill and dexterity in the use of arms, was, in their opinion, the only valuable branch of education. The Scalds, who were their poets, were a race of men so highly honoured, as to have privileges conferred on them superior to what were enjoyed by almost any other rank in the society. Considering the capacity requisite, and the difficulties that attended the discharge of their duty in this office, it is no wonder that this was the case. The kinds of their verse were so numerous, the structure so complicated in each, and the metaphors it contained at the same time so remote, so bold, and so violent, as rendered it not only difficult to compose, but even without being committed to memory, and frequently thought of and repeated, it could not be thoroughly understood. Fortunately, their poems were very short, as all traditional poems necessarily must be; and this circumstance had a palpable tendency to make them more intelligible, as well as more easily composed.

The kinds of them were not more numerous, nor the skill which they displayed more complicated, than the subjects were various. They sung of love; they celebrated the praises of their heroes; they recorded historical events; and mixed with mythology and genealogies many moral sentences of advice and instruction. Some beautiful little specimens of their poetry on several of these subjects still remain. Even the Laplander, in the frozen regions of the pole, discovers warmth sufficient to compose ballads in praise of his mistress, and of his chief; and not only the people of Iceland, who were of old noted for this sort of poetry, but also the inhabitants of the Ferroe Isles \*, sung of their champions, in conformity with a custom that appears to have been prevalent with most of the swarms that issued from the Gothic hive. The Germans had among them this custom in all its force. Hence, among other instances that might be collected, Arminius, who distinguished himself among his countrymen for his wisdom, no less than his bravery, had his heroic actions recorded in song by the barbarous nations †

\* Torfæus de rebus gestis Ferroen.

† Tacitus: Caniturque adhuc apud barbaras gentes.



*Musick* is the younger sister of Poetry, and very frequently her companion; and probably was so among this people; though of what kind it was, we are, for want of information from ancient writers, at a loss to determine. The instruments which they made use of were, the horn, chiefly used in battle, as in Scotland, down to the fourteenth century; the harp, invented in the plains of Asia, and thence carried into the extremities of Europe; and even the bagpipe itself, which has sometimes been thought to be a Celtic instrument, does not appear to have been unknown to them. Thus much at least is certain from marbles, coins, and even from their own authors, that both the Romans and the Greeks were acquainted with the use of this instrument at an early period; and so late as the sixth century, it was still used as an instrument of war among the foot, as the trumpet was among the horse, as we learn from ancient authority\*. From them its use in war has been supposed to come, not only into Britain, but many other countries that were subject to the Roman power†.

Govern-  
ment.

As the government of a people naturally springs from their genius, their character, and the state of their improvements, so, after it is established, it exerts much influence on their manners. The kind of it which the Picts had originally, or in their first settlements, cannot, from the silence of ancient writers, now be perfectly known. That branch of them, however, which inhabited Caledonia in the time of the Roman expedition, was divided into several petty states, similar to those that then occupied the German dominions‡. As they are believed, on good ground, to have sprung from that nation, to which they are said to have borne a striking resemblance, it is reasonable to suppose that their governments were also similar§. That of Germany was a sort of democracy, in which they elected their own chiefs, to whom they granted only a limited authority, while they reserved to themselves, not only the most extensive liberty, but the exercise of the most valuable powers. Caledonia, it would appear, had the same kind of constitution; for we are informed that her states were democratical||; and Galgacus was most probably one of those chiefs whom, on ac-

\* Procopius. † Mr. Pinkerton. ‡ Tacitus. § Idem. || Dio.



count of his uncommon merit, the suffrages of his country had, on that emergency, raised to imperatorial dignity \*. Among some of the Germans, indeed, monarchy is said to have been established; which does not seem to have been the case in any part of the Pictish territory at that period, except in the Western Isles, where a kingdom had been erected that soon spread itself over North Britain. Neither among the one people nor the other, however, were their first kings any more than like the Indian chiefs, who, on account of their superior talents, bravery, or eloquence, had acquired such an influence in their respective tribes, as naturally descended to their relations. In the subsequent age, their government assumed a more regular and permanent form. They had among them † a senate and a noble race, a royal stock from which their kings were chosen; and when such an event took place, the late king's brother, if better qualified, by age or capacity, to hold the reins of government, was frequently preferred to the royal offspring. Strange as this may appear, it is not more so than what happened with another branch of that people, who, in the eighth century, effected a settlement in Iceland. Compelled to fly their native country, to avoid the flames of war which ambition had kindled, they took possession of this barren island, where, instead of adopting that form of government to which they had been accustomed, or electing chiefs like their kindred tribes, they formed themselves into a regular republic; in which there was such an admirable distribution of the powers of government, as, at the same time, secured liberty, and promoted order and subordination. Its constitution, however extraordinary it may appear, is, in every respect, as well authenticated, as those of the most celebrated states of antiquity; and such a form of polity, among a barbarous people, merits the attention of the curious, as a striking singularity in the history of *man*.

So early as the first century, the Caledonians used cars in battle ‡, like the Belgæ in Gaul. The king of the § Crathini, in Ireland, is represented as using one also; and, for the same purpose, they were employed by the

\* Tacitus: Inter plures duces, &c.

† Adamnan, vit. St. Col. Rex cum senatu valde pertimescens domum egressus—quondam de nobili Pictorum genere.—This solid and intelligent author mentions also the *Familiares Regis*, the *Comites* of Cæsar and Tacitus.

‡ Tacitus.

§ Adamnan.



Scandinavians so late as the tenth or eleventh century. In the noted battle of the Grampians they had cavalry \*. Their swords were large, and, having no points, were fit for cutting, but not thrusting; and they wore a small kind of shields, that bore a resemblance to those of the Germans †. In common almost with all barbarous nations, they made much use of bows and arrows; the latter of which were pointed with flints, instead of metal; and it is these that are so frequently found, and known by the name of *elfstones*. Daggers were instruments in repute with them at a later period ‡, and also lances §; and a kind of hooked spears appears to have been peculiar to the Picts, and the other branches of the same race, which, in besieging towns, they employed to pull down their enemies from the battlements ||.

Religion. High as their military spirit was, it was inflamed almost to fury by the peculiar genius of their religion. Among the many circumstances that combine to form the human character, there is none of more influence than the opinion that is formed of the object of our worship. This is completely verified in the history of the people under consideration. Trusting undoubted authority, we must consider them of German origin; and from the masterly picture that has been drawn of the manners of the people of that nation, we know that their religion taught the existence of a ‘Supreme God, the Ruler of the universe, to whom all things were subject ¶.’ The ancient mythology of Iceland taught, in strong energetic terms, the same most important truth. In it the object of their worship is styled, ‘The Author of every thing that exists; the Eternal; the living and awful Being, who searches into concealed matters, and is subject to no change; of incorruptible justice, infinite power, and unbounded knowledge \*\*.’ From this all perfect God sprung, as emanations of his divinity, an infinite number of inferior deities, who presided over and directed the operations of nature; and who, on account of the service which they thus performed to mankind challenged a share in their adoration. Agreeably to this notion, the Picts, inhabiting Caledonia in the sixth century, paid a sort of divine

\* Tacitus. † Idem. ‡ Dio. § Herodian. || Gildas.

¶ Tacitus: *Regnator omnium Deus, cetera subjecta atque parentia.*

\*\* Edda and Voluspa.



worship to fountains, and acknowledged many of these inferior gods, whom they reckoned superior to the God of the Christians. The same people had also magi, or priests, who they vainly supposed could raise storms, and perform other miracles: with these the good St. Columba had many pious conflicts in defence of his mission\*.

To offer up sacrifices to their Supreme Being; to address thanks and supplications to him; to do no wrong to others; and to be bold and intrepid, were the moral precepts which they drew from their doctrines; and their firm faith in a future state cemented the venerable fabric, and finished the structure of their religion. In that state, tortures of the most excruciating kind awaited those who despised these most important precepts; and joys without number, and without end, were the portion of such as had been honest, valiant, and religious.

This system, at once so pure and so rational, and at the same time so creditable for human nature to have adopted in its unenlightened state, was of such antiquity, as to be derived † from the Scythians; and was long believed and practised among the nations in the north, which sprung from that root. But, unhappily, this beautiful structure, in the course of ages, was much corrupted.

The Supreme Being, instead of being considered as extending his attention and energy to all nature, was now confined to one province; and passed, with the bulk of the people, under the name of Odin, or the God of War. No object, in their opinion, could be more worthy of his attention than military contests; nor demonstrate more forcibly the extent of his power. Hence, the horrible picture of the god Odin, that is sometimes given us in the Icelandic writings ‡. There he is styled, ‘The severe and terrible deity; the father of slaughter; the god that causeth desolation and fire; the active and tremendous majesty, who giveth victory, and reviveth courage in the conflict, and marketh those in battle who are to be slain.’

The aid of this deity was implored in every war that was undertaken; the vows of the hostile armies were addressed to him; and he was believed

\* Adamnan, vit. St. Col.

† Mallet's Northern Antiquities.

‡ Edda, Myth. 3.



to descend and mix with the combatants, in order to inflame their fury; to strike those that were to perish, and convey their valiant spirits to his celestial abode \*. There his *valball*, or palace, stood open to receive them, into which they entered amidst praises and congratulations, and were invited to sit at his table, loaded with dainties †, which they were henceforth destined to partake of without end, and without satiety.

To that branch of this extraordinary people, which so long occupied this country, ought we perhaps to ascribe some objects of antiquity, which could not be conveniently classed under any of the foregoing heads. The first of these we shall mention, are those tumuli, or barrows, which so often present themselves to the eye in wandering over the surface of these islands; and which are plainly the rude memorials of persons of note in early days. The most ancient method of disposing of the dead was by interment. The earliest Greeks adopted this custom, in which they were imitated by the Romans in the infancy of their state; and the Celts, a very ancient people, seem also to have preferred this method; and, on the graves of illustrious persons, they gathered heaps of stones into a pile, which they called cairns, or cromlechs, to distinguish them from those of the multitude.

The remains of people of the same eminence among the Gothic tribes were treated in a different manner. Though their enemies, and the inferior ranks, were interred, the bodies of men of distinction, as has been already stated, were either wholly, or in part, consumed to ashes; which were carefully collected either into an *urn* or a coffin, formed of stones; and a heap of earth, or tumulus, was raised over them. Hence, the number of these tumuli, or barrows, spread over the countries inhabited by the different branches of that ancient people in Norway, Sweden, Denmark, England, and the east coast of Scotland, as well as in some of the Hæbudæ, in Iceland, and the Orkney Isles. The numbers found here are considerable; seldom single, but two, or three, or more, in the same place; all of a circular form, and different in dimensions; placed without any distinction of hill or dale,

\* Mallet's Northern Antiquities.

† The principal dainty promised to the worshippers of Odin, was getting drunk with mead, or ale, from the skulls of their enemies; which, in Odin's hall, were used in place of goblets.—E.



by the sea, or inland; generally in dry places, and for the most part on sandy ground. Some few of them are encircled with stones set on edge around their bottoms; a remarkable one has two stones set upright on its top; and when curiosity has penetrated their interior, they are almost all found to exhibit contents in which there is much similarity. As in England, those that have been opened have discovered, some of them, *urns* with ashes; some, stone coffins, in which the bodies have been deposited; and some, naked skeletons\*;—so here also, when looked into, they have been found to contain the same things. But besides these, which are the principal, several other articles have sometimes been found along with them; such as the bones of some domestic animal; swords of metal, or of bone; helmets, combs; with other things, the use of which cannot now be discovered.

The eye can scarcely be directed to a field, in which these tumuli are situated in any number, without the opinion being formed, that this has been a field of battle, and these the graves of the brave that had been slain; the similarity of form, and difference of size, pointing out their respective rank, their merit, or their eminence. That these were the rude monuments exclusively appropriated to perpetuate the deeds of noted warriors is rendered probable, not only from arms being found in them, but because among that people military virtues alone were deemed worthy of honour. Before closing this article, it is necessary to observe, that we ought not to confound these tumuli with those that are similar in almost every respect, but placed on the highest or most conspicuous part in every island. To convey intelligence readily from one place to another, and particularly to spread the alarm in case of the approach of an enemy, the latter were generally thrown up on the highest hill, and had fires of wood and other combustible matter lighted on them; and the name of *Warts*, or *Wards*, which they at present bear, has a manifest allusion to this circumstance.

To the same people, perhaps, and about the same period, must be referred another class of objects, that, in different places, raise their lofty heads to arrest the attention of the curious. These are the huge standing stones, one or more of which may be seen in most of the islands. They

\* Mr. Pinkerton.



are commonly from twelve to twenty feet in height above ground, their breadth five, and thickness one or more; and as the most of them seem, from the places in which they are erected, to have been carried from a considerable distance, it may justly excite wonder, how, in the ignorance of mechanical powers, this could be effected. Numbers, and perseverance united, will achieve deeds, to conceive which would baffle the efforts of imagination.

By whatever means they were brought, or in whatever manner erected, they are rude blocks of hard stone, of the same shape in which they were raised from the quarry; without any marks of an instrument; without carving, inscription or hieroglyphics; they are plainly the monuments of an early age, when the people were ignorant of arts and of letters.

For what purpose, or with what design, they were erected, antiquity furnishes us with no account; records are silent; and tradition, to which recourse must be sometimes had, in the penury of other evidence, ventures not, in this case, to hazard an opinion.

Some have supposed them intended to mark the spot that contained the bones, or the ashes, of a beloved prince, a brave chieftain, or dear departed friend; or to serve as a boundary between the territories of one great man and those of another: while others have imagined them designed to preserve the remembrance of some noted event that concerned the safety, the honour, or the advantage of the community.

Since no tumuli, urns, or graves, have ever been found near them, they cannot certainly be considered as memorials of the dead; nor is it more probable that they were intended to mark the limits of contiguous proprietors; as land-marks, equally well calculated to serve the purpose, might have been erected with infinitely less labour. If, therefore, they were not intended to serve the purpose of places of worship, they were most likely raised to preserve the remembrance of some fortunate event, or perpetuate the memory of some noble action; and the rough simplicity of their appearance sufficiently justifies us in referring them to an early age, and to the first inhabitants of these islands.

A third kind of monuments, which ought to be considered as relics of the same people, are those ancient structures, or ruins, well known in many places by the name of Burghs-castles, or more commonly Picts-houses.

Sometimes



Sometimes they stand in little holms in the midst of lochs, with a road formed of stones to connect them with the island; sometimes on high land by the sea, near the brink of precipitous rocks; but much oftener on the skirts of sandy bays, and in the vicinity of landing places. Encircling the shores of the mainland, as well as those of the other islands, they stretch in a chain from one headland to another, in full view of the harbours, and of the ocean; and are evidently so arranged, as to communicate one with another. Far from being confined to this place, they are found, and that, too, in similar situations, in the country from which the Picts originally came, as well as in those that constituted their once extensive dominion. In proof of this it may be observed, that there is a remarkable one of that kind at Sualsburg, near Drontheim; another called the Castle of Ymsburg, in Westrogothia\*. Many of them are still to be seen on the shores of Caithness, of Sutherland, and of East-Ross. The Vale of Glenelg, near Bernera, contains no fewer than four † ‡. The foundations of several have been discovered on a plain near Perth ||; and that of Dornadilla, in Strathnaver, is no less distinguished for its structure, than the very large one at Dunrobin Castle, which seems to have within its precincts several smaller ones, its connections or dependants §. But, turning from ¶ these, if we direct our attention to the north, with a view to explore the Pictish territories in that quarter, we shall find these ancient structures perhaps in greater number, but certainly more entire, of a more curious form, and of much larger dimensions. Those found in Shetland, and known everywhere in that country by the name of burghs, are much superior in these respects to what are here, or even perhaps to any in Scotland. In the south, and on the east coast, there are but few of them now entire, having been demolished, partly from curiosity to know their structure and contents, and partly in order to carry off their materials, to enclose lands or build farm-houses. But among the sister islands to the north, where there has been no want of

\* Dalberg. Suecia antiqua et hodie.

† Mr. Pinkerton.

‡ Many of these buildings in Glenelg, and districts adjacent, were demolished for stones to build the barracks of Bernera, and to construct bridges on the military road.—For the latter purpose the stones of these buildings were better adapted than any that could be found in that country; which shews they had been originally selected with great care, if not brought from a distance.—E.

|| Pennant's Tour.

§ Idem.

¶ Lowe's Tour, MS. penes me.



materials for these purposes, these curious edifices have been suffered to remain unhurt, in testimony of the respect that the inhabitants have entertained for the works of their ancestors.

They are, almost without exception, of a circular base, rising into the shape of a cone, with its top somewhat blunted; and as they are generally everywhere in ruins, their outside is covered with a thick sward of fine grass, and, on a superficial view, they have very much the appearance of large tumuli, or barrows. Stones of a convenient form, and of a large size, without any sort of cement, are the materials of which they have been constructed; and, on a more narrow inspection, they appear evidently to be of two kinds, differing from each other both in their structure and dimensions. The smaller, which seem to be the oldest, consist of one thick circular wall, in the inside of which there are sometimes places that might have served for beds; and this form, we are told, was agreeable to a mode of building among the people of Iceland, and other Scandinavian colonies \*. In some of them at a greater, and in others at a less height, this wall begins to converge gradually towards the top, till only a small hole remained, which seems to have been either covered with flat stones, or suffered to be open.

The larger are far more complicated in their internal structure. Besides the outer wall, which they have in common with the former, they have also an inner one, concentric with, and distant about two feet from the other; and these walls are so formed, as sometimes to meet at no great height, and thus enclose a space around the bottom of the building. In the form of others of this kind, there is still greater variety. Like the former, they have two walls; but these neither meet nor converge, but ascend parallel to each other at the distance of little more than two feet; and this space, which is entered by a door of two feet high from without, is occupied by a stair of a winding spiral form, from the bottom to the top of the building. The largest kind which are here, as well as in other places, denominated *Burghs*, are surrounded by a broad deep ditch, and a sort of rampart †.

To one or other of these, it is probable, must belong that which has been lately discovered at Quanterness. As works of that nature have never

\* Gunlang's Saga.

† Ihre, Burgh or Borg, Monumentum, Walf-Borg, Castle.



# EXPLANATION

## BISMAR

- A Small end of Bismar
  - B Thick end of B.
  - C Thing to be weighed
  - D Cent for suspending the Instrument and marking the different weights
- 1234e Sticks for showing the different weights from one mark to 24.

NB One mark is the smallest weight weighed upon the Bismar or a hundred the greatest

NB The Sticks from 1 to 12 denote single marks from 12 to 24, denote double marks

## PUNDLER

- AA Beam
  - B Sticks and Ring
  - C Tongue
  - D Thing to be weighed
  - E Thumb of the Pundler
- 3456e Sticks for showing the different weights from 3.5 Attens forward
- NB 3.5 Attens or half a mark is the smallest weight weighed upon the Pundler.

## BISMAR



## PUNDLER

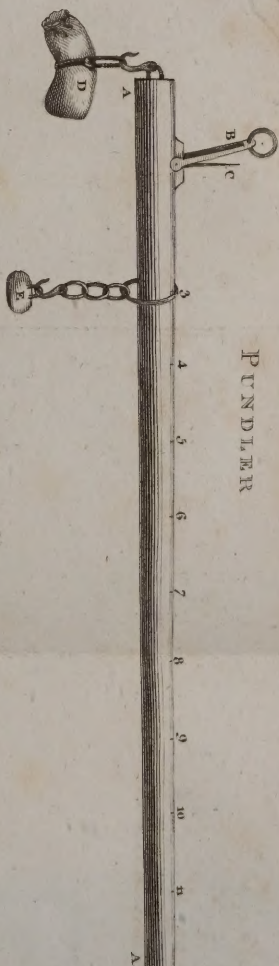


Fig. 1.

ANCIENT PICK HOUSE  
DISCOVERED AT QUANDREBEE.

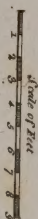
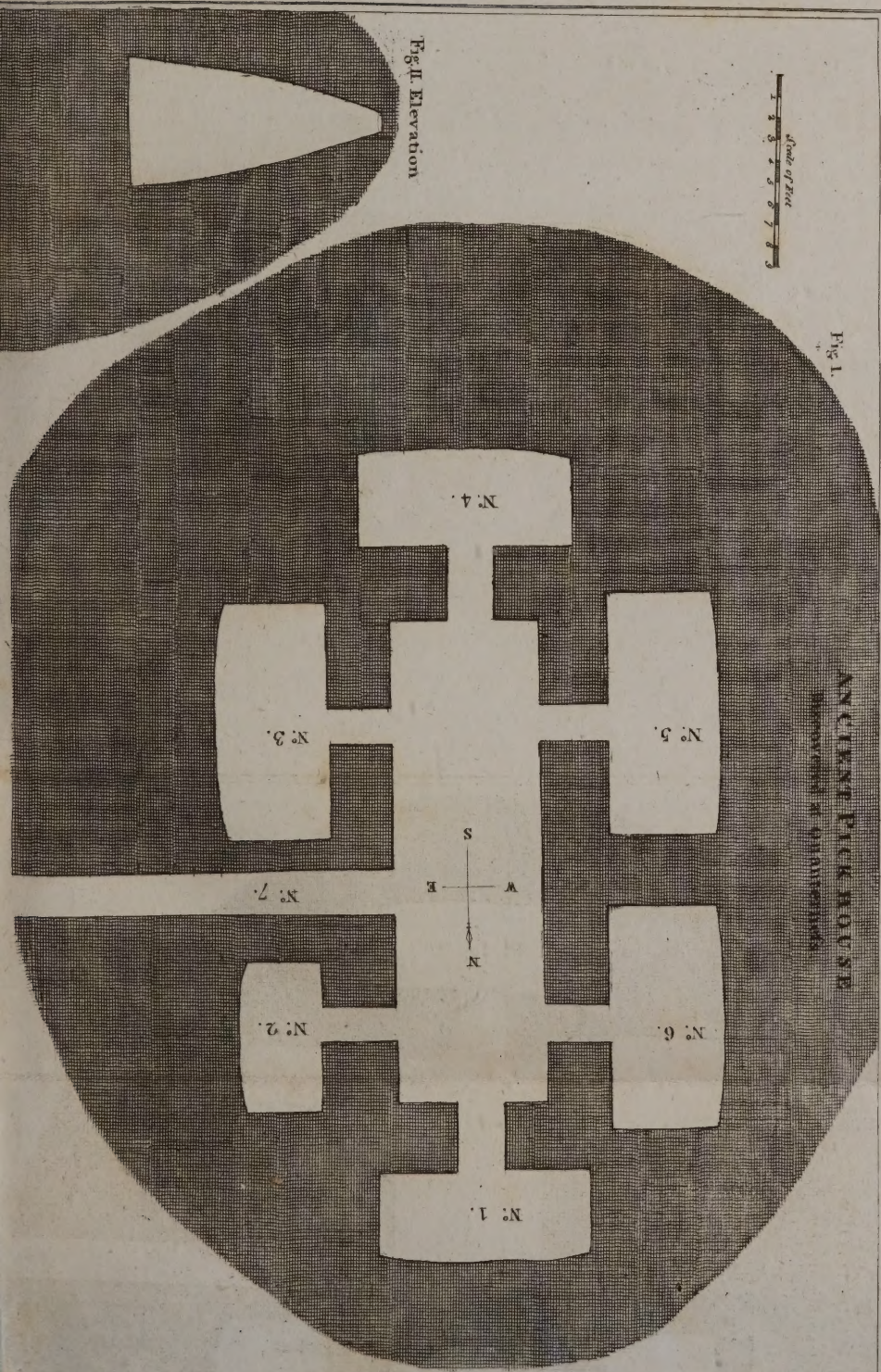


Fig. II. Elevation









been clearly understood, though they have excited much curiosity in men who take pleasure in studying the progress of the human mind, by looking back to early ages, the utmost attention has been given to examine that Picts-house with care, to measure its dimensions accurately, and to delineate the form of all its parts with precision. Situated on a gentle declivity, under the brow of the hill of Wideford, it looks toward the North Isles; has a full view of the bay of Frith, and the pleasant little island of Dansey, from which it is not far distant, and lies little more than a mile west from the road or harbour of Kirkwall. Like the rest it bears externally the form of a truncated cone, the height of which is about fourteen feet, and the circumference at the base three hundred and eighty-four; but whether, like them also, it be surrounded by one or two circular walls, the quantity of rubbish prevented us from discovering, though, that it is so, is very probable. In one respect it differs from most of them, as it stands alone, and at a distance from the shore; whereas, in general, they are situated on the shores of the sea, and several of them at no great distance from, and in full view of one another, as if they were some way or other connected, or had been intended for mutual communication.

Internally it consists of several cells or apartments, the principal one of which is in the centre, twenty-one feet six inches long, six feet six inches broad, and eleven feet six inches high, built without any cement, with large flat stones, the one immediately above projecting over that below, so as gradually to contract the space within as the building rises, till the opposite walls meet at the top, where they are bound together by large stones laid across, to serve as it were for key-stones. Six other apartments of an exactly similar form, constructed with the same sort of materials, and united in the same manner, but of little more than half the dimensions, communicate with this in the centre, each by a passage about two feet square, on a level with the floor; and the whole may be considered as connected together by a passage of nearly the same extent from without, which leads into this chief apartment. So far as can now be discovered, there does not appear ever to have been, in any part of the building, either chink or hole for the admission of air or light; and this circumstance alone is sufficient to show that it had not been destined for the abode of men. The contents



were accordingly such as might have been naturally expected in such a gloomy mansion. None of those things, which have been discovered in similar places, were found here; but the earth at the bottom of the cells, as deep as it could be dug, was of a dark colour, of a greasy feel, and of a fetid odour, plentifully intermingled with bones, some of which were almost intirely consumed, and others had, in defiance of time, remained so entire, as to shew that they were the bones of men, of birds, and of some domestic animals. But though many of them had nearly mouldered into dust, they exhibited no marks of having been burnt; nor were ashes of any kind to be seen within any part of the building. In one of the apartments, an entire human skeleton, in a prone attitude, was found; but in the others, the bones were not only separated from one another, but divided into very small fragments.

FIG. I.

## GROUND PLAN OF THE PICTS-HOUSE.

| <i>Largest Apartment.</i> |   |   |        | No. 4.                                     |   |      |                    |
|---------------------------|---|---|--------|--------------------------------------------|---|------|--------------------|
|                           |   |   | F. IN. |                                            |   |      | F. IN.             |
| Length                    | — | — | 21 6   | Length                                     | — | —    | 9 9                |
| Breadth                   | — | — | 6 6    | Breadth                                    | — | —    | 4 4                |
| Height                    | — | — | 11 6   | Height                                     | — | —    | 8 1                |
| No. 1.                    |   |   |        | No. 5.                                     |   |      |                    |
|                           |   |   | F. IN. |                                            |   |      | F. IN.             |
| Length                    | — | — | 8 11   | Length                                     | — | —    | 10 7               |
| Breadth                   | — | — | 3 6    | Breadth                                    | — | —    | 4 1                |
| Height                    | — | — | 6 8    | Height                                     | — | —    | 7 6                |
| No. 2.                    |   |   |        | No. 6.                                     |   |      |                    |
|                           |   |   | F. IN. |                                            |   |      | F. IN.             |
| Length                    | — | — | 7 2    | Length                                     | — | —    | 9 5                |
| Breadth                   | — | — | 3 9    | Breadth                                    | — | —    | 4 5                |
| Height                    | — | — | 8 7    | Height                                     | — | —    | 7 0                |
| No. 3.                    |   |   |        | <i>Passage into the Great Room, No. 7.</i> |   |      |                    |
|                           |   |   | F. IN. |                                            |   |      | F. IN.             |
| Length                    | — | — | 10 0   | Length                                     | — | 22 0 | as far as we could |
| Breadth                   | — | — | 4 1    | Breadth                                    | — | 1 9  | go for rubbish.    |
| Height                    | — | — | 8 6    | Height                                     | — | 2 0  |                    |



The passages from the great room to the smaller ones were in breadth and height about the same as No. 7. and their length (which was the thickness of the wall) about 3 feet 7 inches.

Circumference of the building is 64 fathoms.

*N. B.*—Above the entrance into No. 4, there was a sort of square recess in the wall.

Fig. II. Elevation and section of the great room.—The shape of the rest is similar to this one.

But what use could be made, or what purpose was intended to be served, by piles of such a form, of such a size, and in such situations?

Neither the number of the whole, nor the quantity of accommodation in each, will suffer us to entertain any rational belief that they were the first rude attempts to obtain permanent places of abode, and served the inhabitants at large as ordinary habitations. Little better are they calculated, in appearance, to serve the purpose of storehouses, which indeed in that age would not be deemed necessary. That they were not the residence of the rich among that celebrated people, may be surmised from their darkness, from the want of windows from without; their dampness, on account of the thickness of the walls, and the air having little access, or free circulation; and particularly, because the apartments are so small, that a person could never stand, and indeed not even sit, upright; and if this had not been the case, they do not contain room sufficient to accommodate such families, with their servants and dependants. It is true, indeed, a celebrated modern antiquary, to whose opinion, in a matter of this kind, we are disposed to pay the utmost deference, has imagined, that, from their being called Duns in the Highlands, and several of them being sometimes found together in glens and sheltered places, they have been the winter retreats of the opulent; to which, in that season, they had recourse, for mutual security, friendship and conversation \*. But this could not have been the case, in general; since in Shetland they commonly stood single, either on the high hills, or on the brink of stupendous rocks, skirting the islands †; and in Sutherland, Caith-

\* Mr. Pinkerton.

† Low's Tour, MS.



ness, and this country, at no great distance, and in full view of each other, on the shores, and in exposed situations.

From a review, then, of their different sites, singly, and in relation to one another; their form, their dimensions, and internal structure; it is apprehended they will appear to have been fit for, and perhaps served the purpose of, watch-towers, to guard against surprise from an enemy; of places to secure military arms, and other precious articles; and of garrisons, to prevent hostile boats from landing.

Such are the monuments of that ancient people; who have been characterised as a tall, fair, comely, robust, generous race of men\*; with manners of such a nature and influence, as to serve them instead of laws; discovering an ignorance of many of the useful arts, a love of some of them, and a contempt of others; subjected to a government, in which liberty and civil order were happily combined; and displaying a warlike spirit, that had seldom been equalled, and never surpassed; which was inflamed almost into madness by the peculiar genius of their religion. Though they could not all be equal in these respects, but must have differed considerably by the operation of time, place, and other circumstances, still these were prominent features, this their distinctive character, both in the stem and in all the ramifications.

That branch of them, therefore, that had fixed their abode here, must have exhibited the principal traits and lineaments which so strongly marked the character of their brethren; and many opportunities would occur to display them, during their long residence, which commenced perhaps in the first, and terminated towards the close of the ninth century.

About that time a new order of things took place; a change was effected in the manners, customs, institutions and government of that people, and, not a great many years afterwards, also in their religion. This was occasioned by the arrival of new tribes; swarms from the great *northern hive*; which, some centuries before, had poured out such multitudes, as spread terror over the south of Europe. From the borders of Norway, and the

\* Fordun, Scotichron.



shores of the Baltic, where they had long a fixed residence, they issued in numbers; and almost in the same age took possession of the Ferroes, Iceland, the Hæbudæ, several parts of Britain, Shetland, and the Orkney Isles.

So strong is the attachment which men feel for their native soil, and so fortunately partial are they to its manners and laws, that they seldom or never abandon it, unless either compelled by tyranny, or allured by the prospect of suddenly bettering their condition. For a people, therefore, such as these were, to have left their homes in such multitudes, where they had not only friends and property, but customs and institutions; to take possession of countries, some of which, at least, were of an unpromising aspect; there must have been one or other of these causes, the particulars of which require to be explained\*.

\* It is evident that the cells, of which our author has furnished a plan, served the purpose of a storehouse, or larder; and that the place of habitation must have been above, though the walls which inclosed the latter may have been demolished. The narrowness of these cells must be ascribed to the incapacity of their architects to throw an arch: and it is possible these buildings may have been constructed before the arch was invented.

The human bones found with those of other animals, particularly those, page 100, "divided into very small fragments," excite a suspicion that the inhabitants of this building were cannibals, and devoured human flesh. Perhaps some of these cells might have served the purpose of a black-hole, or dungeon, afterwards a necessary appendage to every baron's castle, where the lordly occupant of the mansion might confine prisoners of war; men accused of crimes; or some who had, unfortunately, given offence to his sublimity. But if the flesh of these miserable beings was not devoured, why break their bones into small fragments?

The most entire of these buildings the Editor has any where seen, is *Dun Carlaway*, in the parish of Lochs, island of Lewis. It stands on a solid rock, projecting towards the south, and is of a conical form, like the furnace of a glass-house; only it widens more rapidly than the cone towards the base. Nearly one half of the building, on the north side, has been demolished, or has fallen down. The southern half, from the base to the summit, seemed to be about 50 feet in height; and most probably was originally higher, and contracted to a narrow aperture at top. A projection of stones, forming a circle on the inside, seems to prove that a wooden floor had rested upon them, nearly on a level with the ground on the north side; and there is sufficient depth of building to admit a story below this, though the space is now filled with loose stones. It is built of flat, undressed masses of granite, or gneiss, without cement, and consists of an interior and exterior wall, parallel to each other. Between the walls, large horizontal flag-stones, connecting the walls on each side, form passages in which a man can easily walk. These passages run horizontally round the building, to a certain extent; and then rise by a rude stair, or gently inclined plane, to other horizontal passages, and so on, until they conduct to the summit. The diameter, within the walls of the projecting circle of stones on which the floor had rested, is twenty-five feet, eight inches; the thickness of the wall, at this point, nine feet one inch. There may be about eight or ten feet of building below this circle, where the wall becomes rapidly thicker, but the accumulation of rubbish prevented its measurement.

The



The island of Sky is surrounded by similar buildings, all on high grounds, and in view of each other. One on a high rock, in the center of Arnish, commands a view of similar forts on each side of it. A circular parapet of loose stones incloses a considerable area, in the center of which the ruins of the conical building are situated. The diameter of the building at the surface of the rubbish, within walls, is 36 feet, 8 inches. The thickness of the walls, at this point, is 10 feet, 3 inches.

In one of these buildings in Kintail, the door, or entry, is seen, unchoaked by rubbish. It is built of stones of large size, and covered by an angular stone, or lintel, of vast magnitude. It is so low and narrow, that only one could enter at a time, stooping low, or crawling on all fours.—Within the door are lateral holes in the wall, on each side, which seem intended for receiving masonry wooden bolts. Within these, there are large circular recesses, on each side of the passage, about seven feet high, covered by large stones thrown across, which seem intended for guard-rooms, as they may hold upwards of twenty people, who could stand erect, and make use of their weapons. Within the guard-rooms, the entrance again becomes low and narrow, and seems to have ascended to an upper floor by winding passages in the walls, similar to those of Duncarlaway: but rubbish prevented its being traced.

In Glenpie, contiguous to Glenelg, there are several ruins of these buildings, and two of them pretty entire. The first that occurs has a low, narrow entry, with a recess, or guard-room behind, similar to the one last described. What remains of the building may be about thirty feet high, though it was probably much higher formerly, and contracted to a small aperture. It has three horizontal passages, all round the inside of the wall, at equal heights above each other, and which communicate by rude stairs. The entry to these passages is from the inside, by open parallelogramic spaces, exactly in the four cardinal points, two of which descend from top to bottom, and two opposite ones only half way down. Across these open spaces, flat stones are thrown at regular heights, to bind the opposite cheeks of the interior wall. They resemble horizontal shelves, by which a man may climb to the top, or throw himself into any of the interior passages, at pleasure. A circle of stones projects all round above the interior rubbish, and seems intended, like that of Duncarlaway, to rest a floor upon; and leaves room below for a ground floor, or cellar. Another similar circle projects about twenty feet above this, and seems intended to support a second floor.

|                                                                           | Feet. | Inches. |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|---------|
| The diameter, within walls, at the lowest projecting circle of stones, is | 34    | 6       |
| Breadth of the wall through the door                                      | 12    | 0       |
| Ditto, 8 feet higher                                                      | 8     | 10      |
| Ditto, as high as I could reach, by scrambling on the broken wall         | 6     | 8       |

The other building is every way similar to this; but it has only one projecting circle of stones for supporting a floor.

|                                       | Feet. | Inches. |
|---------------------------------------|-------|---------|
| Diameter at this platform             | 29    | 5       |
| Thickness of wall at ditto            | 11    | 3       |
| Thickness as high as could be reached | 7     | 6       |
| Height within above platform          | 20    | 0       |
| Ditto without, above rubbish          | 21    | 10      |

It is only in Orkney, Caithness, and along the east coast, that these buildings are ascribed to the Picts. In the Hebrides, and opposite mainland, they are generally ascribed to the Norwegians, or Danes, when they possessed these countries; and not seldom to fairies, witches, Fingalians, and other ideal beings. In the latter situations, they are always called *Duns* or *Duins*, which mean either hills, or forts upon hills. At the junction of Loch Luig with Loch Duich, there is a detached hill, on which a considerable building of this sort seems to have stood, though the stones have been mostly



removed, for other purposes. But on a small rocky island, near the shore, at a short distance from this, very conspicuous ruins of one of these buildings remain. Both of these are called *Duin Diarmid*, and are said to have been occupied by one of the Fingalian heroes, who resided chiefly on the land, but retreated to the island in cases of extremity.

It would be fruitless to enumerate the very numerous ruins, and fragments of these buildings, which are scattered through the mainland and isles, from Orkney to Kintyre. But no one can contemplate them without being struck with astonishment at the pains which have been used to bring undressed stones into such close contact; the protuberances of one being so managed as to fill the vacuities of the one with which it is in contact. Nor is our surprise lessened at observing the skill that has been employed in making the stones overlap, cross, and bind each other. Not a stone is loose, but each presses, and is pressed upon, by the whole weight of the superior building. Our admiration must still be increased, on remarking the science which must have operated in preserving the curvature of the building in all parts, external and internal, without the slightest deviation. The measurements presented may show how rapidly the wall thickens and extends towards the base. The interior wall is always a perfect cone, whose apex is much higher than the wall that remains. The external contour of these buildings presents a lively idea of the logarithmic curve, whose asymptotes have been taken from the cone within, with the most scrupulous exactness at every point on the same horizontal level.

Much difference of opinion has subsisted with regard to the uses of these buildings: but we apprehend them to have been places of habitation and defence.

The first rude attempt of man to shelter himself from the inclemency of the weather, is the construction of a wigwam, or branches of trees stuck in the ground, in the periphery of a circle, and united at top in the form of a cone. But this building would soon be found insufficient to defend him from the attacks of wolves, and beasts of prey. He would next build up a high parapet of stone, around his circular wigwam, to prevent these animals from disturbing his nightly slumbers. Accordingly we find very numerous small circular buildings of this sort, in the eastern parts of Ross and Inverness shires, which are called Drinnach's [Pict's] houses; and seem to have been the abodes of the first cultivators of the land. Of these the door is always towards the east, which shews the inhabitants paid a particular veneration to the rising sun — But human foes could break in upon the sleeping inhabitants through the roof of such houses; and this seems to have suggested the idea of raising them to a great height. The low and narrow door gave them a great advantage when attacked; and by the passages within the walls, they could ascend to the top, from which they might annoy their enemies with stones, and missile weapons. Some think these passages were used as beds; but, if that was the case, they must have been very cold. It is not probable that these people were very nice about their beds; but that they lay down and slept upon the floor where they resided during the day.

There seems little reason to ascribe these buildings to Picts, or any particular people. They, more probably, originated in a rude state of society, and the necessity of defence. — E.



## CHAP. III.

OF THE ARRIVAL OF THE SCANDINAVIANS, AND THEIR TRANSACTIONS IN  
THESE ISLANDS.

A.D.876. NORWAY, a little before this event took place, seems to have been in much the same condition with Britain half a century before, and Germany near a whole century after, the Christian æra, as described by Cæsar and Tacitus. Instead of being completely united into one body, under the direction of one sovereign and one system of laws, it was, like them, divided into a number of petty states, differing in some particulars from one another. The state of landed property however appears to have been the same in all, and most probably bore a resemblance to what it was some centuries before. Among the Germans \*, the cultivated lands were not considered as the property of individuals, but of the whole tribe, which they cultivated, and sowed and reaped in common; and those that were destined for pasturage, there is reason to suppose, were likewise common. The only property, therefore, which they could have, besides some articles of clothing and household furniture, must have consisted almost wholly in domestic animals.

Accordingly, we are told, that men were there reckoned rich, not, as in other places, from the extent of their fields, but in proportion to the number of their flocks and their herds, of which they had great abundance. In particular, they had vast multitudes of sheep and swine, that were suffered, without restraint, to roam at large on the plains and mountains; and the few horses that they reared, together with their black cattle, which were far more numerous, were carefully kept nearer home, and shut up, during night, in stables built of turf, adjoining to, or sometimes under the same roof with the mansion-house †. Many among them abounded much in this species of primitive wealth; on which, however, they did not so much

\* Tacitus de Moribus Ger.

† Islands Landnama Bok.



value themselves, as to despise their inferiors, or plead an exemption from obedience to the laws. The rich were independent, brave, and generous; the poor respected them, and partook of the same noble spirit. Being free, and having a voice in their little national councils, they discovered a mutual regard for the rights of each other; and, like brethren, living with their flocks on the hills in summer, and in the glens and valleys in winter, they had houses situated so near to each other, as to form a kind of group, that were known by the name of towns in that country.

They were no doubt induced to choose such situations, and to crowd together in that sort of hamlets, by the considerations of friendship and family connexions, no less than by those of shelter and defence; and no situation could have been more favourable for indulging their social spirit. Every benevolent heart, every friend to mankind, who suffers himself to consider the condition of that happy people, must ardently wish that they had continued in that state, which in many respects appeared so favourable to the increase of their numbers, to their industry, to their intellectual, and even their moral improvement. The ambition of Harold Harfager, or the fair-haired, however, soon interrupted the course of their blessings. In the room of that harmony which had long reigned among them, and of that liberty to which they were ever ready to bow the knee, he introduced among them, at first discord, then desolation, and at last the cruel and arbitrary sway of a conqueror.

This prince, whose name is famous in the annals of his country, was of an enterprising and undaunted spirit; and, dissatisfied with the territories which he inherited or possessed, formed the design of embarking in an enterprise, that would both extend his power, and crown him with laurels. With a view to its execution, he considered accurately the nature of the little states around him; weighed, with prudence, both their policy and power, courted the alliance of some; threatened others, and soon involved the whole of them in the horrors of war; in which they were either successively subjugated, or forced to abandon their country, and have recourse for habitations to those islands that lay towards the west.

Thither they were soon afterwards followed by numbers of their countrymen; who, disgusted at the change that had taken place, by which they



had been stripped of that independence which they had always held dearer than life, joined their acquaintance in their newly acquired settlements, where they all cordially concurred in cherishing the most implacable resentment against their common enemy \*. To gratify this passion, (which they were at no pains to conceal) as they were unable to furnish a squadron fit to shake his recently erected throne, they fitted out single vessels, which, branded by him with the name of pirates, intercepted any little trade that he had, and harassed his people, by frequently ravaging the coasts, and plundering the skirts of his dominions.

Fired with rage at such treatment from those whom, on account of the paucity of their numbers, he styled ignominiously freebooters, he resolved, in the pride of his power, to check, what he called, their insolence and audacity, by the force of arms.

In order to carry this purpose into effect, he collected forces through the whole of Norway, of which he was now the sole monarch, and equipped a fleet, at great expence, in which they embarked; and leaving their native shores, with a favourable gale, they touched first at Shetland, and soon afterwards landed in the Orkney Isles.

Instead of learning from these invaders the state of the islands, with respect to general appearance, cultivation, number of people, industry, institutions and manners, and several other particulars, that might have either gratified curiosity or extended knowledge, the sum of the information we are able to draw from them is, that on their landing they found, besides their own countrymen, two distinct people, named Peti and Papæ, whom they seem to have regarded as different nations †.

Many conjectures have been formed respecting both these races of people; who they were; what country they came from; and what was the origin or the etymology of their name.

\* Mallet's Introduction to the History of Denmark.

† Diploma in Wallace, edit. Lond. 1700. This ancient and authentic record was a solemn return to Eric King of Norway, in consequence of an order from him, by the Bishop, Chancellor, and others of Orkney, extracted from the archives, and sealed with the seal of the islands, in order to ascertain the right of William Sinclair to the earldom of Orkney. It bears date at Kirkwall, 4th May 1406. See the Appendix for this diploma, No. I., with D. Gule's Translation, No. II.



With regard to the first of them, namely, the *Peti*, there is no difficulty whatever; for they are plainly no other than the *Peihts*, *Piëts*, or *Piks*; whom, on probable evidence, we have already considered as the aborigines or first inhabitants of this place. And, what puts the matter beyond all doubt, the Scandinavian writers generally call the *Piks* *Peti*, or *Pets*: one of them uses the Term *Petia*, instead of *Pictland* \*; and, besides, the frith that divides Orkney from Caithness, is usually denominated *Petland Fiord*, in the Icelandic Sagas or histories.

With regard to the *Papæ*, it is more difficult to ascertain who they were. Some have thought they were a people that had, in some former age, come from Norway; and, in support of this opinion, mention a place of the name of *Papafound*, in that country.

An opinion, much more probable, has been adopted by others; at the head of whom is an ingenious author, whose labours have thrown much light on the ancient state of Europe †. He supposes they were the Irish *Papas*, or priests, who had long been the only clergy in the *Pictish* dominions; and as they spoke another language, and were also different in their appearance and manners, they might have readily been taken by these strangers for a distinct race, instead of a separate profession. To give still more probability to this opinion, it may be observed, that in Iceland there was a place of the name of *Papay*, which was perhaps the residence of these priests; for such priests seem evidently to have been there, though expelled, in some commotion of the people; as the Norwegians, on their arrival, found some of their books, and other articles, which they had left behind them ‡.

It may also be remarked, that there are many people of the name of *Papay* or *Papley* here still, as there were formerly, at least, in Iceland §; and both of these may have sprung from the same origin, namely, the *Hibernian* priests, whose zeal carried them into distant lands, to diffuse the principles of their religion.

But, what is still more in point, there are also several places here which still retain the name of *Papay* or *Paplay*, which, when viewed with atten-

\* Saxo-Gram. † Mr. Pinkerton's *Introd. Hist. Scot.* ‡ Arius Frode. § Angrim Jonas.



tion, seem to have something strikingly peculiar. They are all in a retired situation, distinguished for the richness of their soil, and the variety of their natural productions, no less than for the pleasantness of their exposure, and their agreeable prospect; and when all these circumstances are considered, along with some venerable ruins which some of them contain, we are almost compelled to believe that they once were the abode of men of that sacred character. In particular, there are two whole islands that bear that name; both of which, beside the ruins which they exhibit, are distinguished among the group for their commodiousness, their pleasant appearance, and the productive richness of their soil, no less than for their retired situation.

These might have been the chief residence of the Papæ or priests; they might have been their property; or they might have been the places to which they at last retired, when their labours had become unacceptable to the people, and they had been driven from other parts of the country.

But, whether we consider these people to have been an ancient tribe from Scandinavia, or a collection of priests from Ireland, or a race distinct from both, it is but too evident, that both they and the other inhabitants for some time suffered the greatest calamities\*. Those that fled from their native land during the war with Harold, as well as those who, by their depredations, had wasted his territories, when they appeared in arms, though in their own defence, naturally rekindled his resentment; and the innocent natives being involved in the same fate with the rest, the whole met with the most rigorous treatment.

Finding, at length, no resistance to his arms, (the islands having been completely subdued,) he meditated new conquests; and his designs were no sooner formed than they were carried into execution. The Western Isles were the first objects to which his ambition pointed: and there victory attended him in every battle. Having plundered the shores of the mainland, and engaged the inhabitants in several conflicts, he next directed his course to the Isle of Man. On his approach, he found it deserted by the people, and took possession of it without opposition†.

Harold, having now acquired a degree of success in this quarter, that equalled, if not exceeded his hopes, began to think of returning home,

\* Diploma.

† Torf. rerum Orcad. hist.



whither the situation of his unstable affairs called him ; but, previously to his departure, he considered it expedient to secure his conquest, and preserve tranquillity, by establishing some kind of government in the islands. For this purpose, he fixed his attention on Ronald, Count of Merca, his subject, and confidential friend, whom he invested with full power, not only to rule them according to his own discretion, but to reap from them all the advantages that such a situation could confer. This nobleman was distinguished by a train of illustrious ancestors, and still more by a series of heroic deeds, that had procured him among his countrymen the honourable appellations of the Wise and Potent \*; so that, in every respect, he was well qualified to fill the important station to which he had been appointed, with honour to himself, and advantage to the islands. But, as he had extensive property in his own country, together with many dependants and friends ; as he was a favourite at the court of his Sovereign, from whom he had received many, and still expected perhaps more favours ; he preferred a residence at home, to one in a distant country, with all the wealth and honour it promised to bestow. Averse, however, to offend this Prince, by rejecting the benefits which his bounty had conferred on him, and unwilling that they should be lost to his family, he resigned the whole into the hands of his brother Sigurd, whom he prevailed on the King to create an Earl, and confirm his right to the estate, which he had so generously bestowed. 920.

Sigurd the Elder (so called to distinguish him from one of his successors of the same name) was therefore the first Earl of Orkney ; and, by his conduct, plainly evinced, that he was not only actuated by the spirit of the times, but had all the distinctive features of his own family. His brother's influence had raised him to an elevated rank : his bounty had conferred on him both power and opulence, which, instead of rendering him contented with his lot, only served to augment his ambition ; to gratify which, he resolved to extend his territories far beyond those limits which the ocean had prescribed. Diffident, however, of his power for this purpose, he formed an alliance with Thorstein, a man of high rank, and in- 920.

\* Torf. rerum Orcad. hist.



trepid valour; and, in conjunction with him, levied troops, and fitted out a squadron, with which he not only subdued Caithness and Sutherland, but overran the rich shores of East Ross, and even the fertile plains of Murray\*. While he remained in this last province †, he built a town, (the name of which is not mentioned,) in order either to secure his retreat, in case of meeting with disaster, or to enable him to push still farther his victorious arms; but for neither of these purposes did he ever stand in need of such a fortress; for, soon after engaging with a Scottish chieftain in that country, he received in the conflict a mortal wound, of which he died instantly, not without the imputation of having been guilty of perfidy.

Gottorm, his son, a young man equally feeble in mind and body, succeeded him in both his estate and honours, which he enjoyed only for the short space of a year, when he died, without issue; and the earldom reverting to his uncle, to whom it had been originally granted, the islands were again infested with the incursions of freebooters, for want of a spirited governor. In this situation of things, Ronald, either unacquainted with the real state of the country, or blinded by parental affection, appointed one of his sons to that station, who, as the event but too plainly showed, was altogether unqualified for the dignity.

Hallad was the name of this son, who proved himself unworthy of his father, no less on account of his weakness and timidity, than of the supine indolence of his disposition. Though he had been singled out from his father's family, on purpose to be exalted to the government of these islands, (to which he obtained full right, together with the title of an Earl;) yet, instead of sailing from isle to isle to observe the state of the province, or fixing his residence in some central spot, where information could have been most readily procured, he retired to the sequestered island of Rousay, where he spent his time in the most inglorious sloth, as regardless of his own character, as of his people's condition. There he was daily receiving intelligence, from every quarter, that the islands were plundered by pirates, with impunity; men slain; their effects carried off; and every kind of enormity committed: and, though the unfortunate people complained that

\* Torf. rerum Orcad. hist.

† Codex Flatiensis.



these crimes seemed to have been perpetrated by his consent, as he had taken no measures either to prevent or punish them; these insinuations were so far from kindling his rage, or rousing his activity, that they only convinced him of his own incapacity to restore order; and, rather than run the risk of attempting this, he abandoned all; and, returning to Norway, sunk, in a private station, into deserved contempt.

The father, now convinced of his error, though too late, saw, with regret, the dishonour which his son's conduct had entailed on his family; and, anxious to wipe out the stain as quickly as he could, called his other sons before him, to inquire which of them would accept of that station which their brother had filled so improperly, and relinquished with so much disgrace. Entering into their father's sentiments, they readily obeyed his order; and two of them vied with each other for a preference to that station, which they considered as an excellent theatre on which to display their powers.

The celebrated Rolf, or Rollo, one of them, was destined, some time afterwards to act a conspicuous part on a wider and more noble stage. Banished his native country, for controverting the order of his Sovereign, he sailed for the western isles, whither the flower of the Norwegian nobility had fled for refuge, ever since Harold had become sole master of the kingdom. These warriors, eager for revenge and conquest, received him with open arms, as they waited only for such a man to be their chief. Rollo, having put himself at their head, soon saw his force formidable, and directed his course to England, to which his countrymen had made several successful expeditions. But, unfortunately for him, Alfred the Great had, some years before, mounted the throne of that kingdom; and, by his consummate abilities, had established such order, that Rollo, after some fruitless attempts, despaired of making a settlement; and therefore had recourse, for this purpose, to a kingdom where there was much more probability of success. France was then in a state of confusion and imbecility: the reins of government were relaxed, and held by Charles the Simple, with a feeble and unsteady hand. These circumstances were not unknown to Rollo, who, sailing up the Seine, took Rouen, the capital of the province of Neustria. He soon afterwards laid siege to Paris, and  
never



never desisted from waging war against that country, till King Charles was compelled to purchase peace, by giving him his daughter Gesla in marriage, together with the province of Neustria, to be held by him and his posterity for ever, as a feudal dutchy, dependent on the crown of France.

912. Having now arrived at the summit of his hopes, his good fortune seemed only to have increased his virtues; for no sooner did he find himself fixed in the province, which now took the name of Normandy, than he exerted himself to the utmost to promote its prosperity. So uniformly did he pursue this object, and so successful was he in his wise and benevolent schemes, that the historians in the south, as well as those in the north, constantly describe him as a man of uncommon wisdom and capacity; generous, eloquent, indefatigable, intrepid; of noble figure, and a majestic size: so that, next to Alfred, he was the greatest and most humane prince of his age.

Thus did Rollo the First, son of Ronald Count of Merca, and Earl of Orkney, secure that noble province to his descendants, who afterwards, in the person of William the Conqueror, augmented it, by their valour, in the conquest of England.

This extraordinary man was eager to undertake the charge of the islands, to which his father refused to procure him the appointment, as if from a presentiment of his future greatness, that he was destined to be Duke of Normandy, and the fortunate father of an illustrious race of kings. The offers of another being accepted, he was invested in due time, furnished with a retinue suitable to his dignity, and, in a galley of twenty oars, took leave of his native shores; and, having first landed in Shetland, where the people in numbers flocked to his standard, he in a short time arrived in Orkney.

Einar was the name by which this Earl was at first distinguished, who manifested a conduct very different from that of Hallad his brother. Several circumstances concurred in rendering him no great favourite of his father. He was an illegitimate son; born of a woman in a mean station; had early lost the sight of one of his eyes; and had also, in other respects, a countenance harsh and unpleasant. But these bodily defects, which seem to have had but too much influence on his father's affection, were more than



than compensated by the excellence of his mind, which was as fertile as it was vigorous. In every situation in which he was placed, he showed himself prudent, sagacious, and just; and, in the display of these virtues, a resolute boldness was the leading feature in his character. He had an opportunity of discovering his talents soon after his arrival in Orkney; engaging, routing, and thereby ridding the country of those daring freebooters, who had so grievously ravaged it during the former timid and contemptible administration. As this gave him an occasion to show his bravery, in protecting his people from external force, so their condition furnished him with an opportunity to testify his regard to their internal prosperity. Like a wise and humane governor, he carefully attended to the state of those whom he was appointed to rule; and finding them reduced to great hardships for want of fuel, he taught them the use of turf, for which he is highly extolled by the Scalds of the north; and was, from this benevolent action, ever afterwards honoured with the name of Torffeid or Torfeinar. If this can be depended on as a fact, a question naturally arises, how were the people before that time furnished with an article which was always so necessary?

In former ages, wood has evidently been produced here, though neither of a large size nor in great quantity; and, after having been used for fuel for generations, it might have then been exhausted. Instead of it would probably be substituted some of those marine plants, which, on all the shores, grow in abundance; or even perhaps the dung of cattle; to which, when collected and dried in the proper season, some of the islands are even at present obliged to have recourse.

To a people, therefore, thus scantily supplied with what was so necessary to their comfort, in a cold, damp climate, it was almost impossible to do a more signal service; and the man who performed it was justly entitled to a much higher degree of praise than if he had conquered kingdoms. By these, and such like arts, tending to ameliorate the condition of the people, he established himself in their good opinion; and having, by means of his naval and military force, restored order and administered justice, he enjoyed, in that station to which he had been advanced, more than an ordinary degree of tranquillity; which, however, was not permanent.



The news of his prosperity having reached Norway, excited envy in the breasts of the king's sons, who had now arrived at manhood; and they murmured that such wealth, power, and honour, as were possessed by Ronald's family, should have been conferred on any but themselves. Their murmurs were soon succeeded by a resolution to strip him of all these blessings. The nature of the enterprise, in which it was necessary for them to engage for that purpose, required secrecy, and admitted of no delay. For this reason, they immediately attacked Ronald himself, whom they slew, and seized his property; after which, Halfdan, one of the number, sailed directly for Orkney, to wrest as speedily from the hands of his son, that princely fortune, which had been so much the object of his avarice and ambition. He landed without opposition; and the Earl having no apprehension of danger from that quarter, was altogether unprepared for his defence, and therefore prudently left his ordinary residence, and retired into Caithness, with a view to procure succour, or wait an occasion of opposing him with effect. Many, in the mean time, having, either through weakness, or dread of the usurper's cruelty and power, flocked to Halfdan's standard, he was declared king, as being the heir apparent to the crown of Norway. So far fortune, for a while, seemed to favour him. But he had no great reason to congratulate himself on this success; for, when he was in a state of perfect security, he was suddenly surprised by the Earl, his forces cut to pieces, or scattered at the first onset; he himself compelled to consult his safety by flight, and, in some lurking place, hide himself from the fury of his justly incensed enemy. His retreat was soon discovered, from which he was ordered to be dragged forth, and, with horrid solemnity, to be offered up as a sacrifice to *Odin*, in return for the victory. A song was composed on the occasion; and a heap of stones, in the form of a tumulus or barrow, was thrown over the body, to perpetuate the memory of the event\*.

Intelligence of the issue of this unfortunate adventure had no sooner reached Norway, than Harald resolved to punish the cruel ingratitude of Einar, and revenge his son's death. For this purpose, he levied forces with

\* Torfæus et Orkneyinga Saga.



all expedition, and prepared ships to transport them. As soon as this armament was ready, he put to sea, and in a short time reaching Orkney, landed, without any resistance from the Earl; who, apprised of his design, had, as on the former occasion, gone over to Caithness, to avoid the storm that threatened him. His absence afforded the King an opportunity to make a pause, during which he perhaps learned the particulars of his son's conduct; which was by no means such as he could approve; and, at the same time, he obtained such information of the Earl's strength and resources, as made him drop his design of vengeance, and offer terms of accommodation and peace. These were, that he and the rest of the inhabitants, all of whom he considered as implicated in the same guilt, should pay sixty marks of gold, in compensation for having so barbarously treated the son of their sovereign. Though these were reckoned by the people extravagant, the Earl accepted them, rather than risk an engagement, the event of which might be doubtful; and he paid the whole sum himself, receiving the lands of the proprietors in pledge for repayment; which, as they were not redeemed, remained in the hands of the Earls, till restored by Sigurd, one of them, to the owners.

Having thus terminated an affair that threatened ruin to both him and his people, and dreading no more danger from abroad, he directed his attention henceforth to the arts of peace; in the exercise of which he lived many years respected, no less for his wisdom than his magnanimity; and, at an advanced old age, died a natural death, leaving three sons, Arnkel, Erlend, and Thorfen; all of whom, in the space of a few years, succeeded him.

Arnkel and Erlend were the two eldest, who jointly obtained their father's estate and honours; and, having lived in the utmost concord for the space of four years, they promoted, equally by their authority and example, due order among the people, and preserved tranquillity. This happy state, however, it is likely, would not have been of very long duration.

Both of them were men of talents and enterprise; and, thinking the theatre on which they acted too narrow, they eagerly wished for an opportunity of acquiring military glory, on a wider and more conspicuous stage.



It was not long before they found an opportunity to accomplish their wishes, which were so natural to their years and their education, and which sprung spontaneously from the manners of the age.

After the death of Harold Harfager, a contest had arisen among his sons, about the succession to the crown of Norway; and, as the prize was great, and the combatants of a temper that was neither yielding nor pacific, the point in question was ultimately referred to the decision of the sword. The whole kingdom was soon in the utmost distraction, from the violence of the factions that had run to arms, to support the pretensions of their respective friends; and all the horrors of a civil war must have been the consequence, had not one of the candidates, by the loss of his popularity and his power, been compelled to abandon his country, and try if fortune would be more propitious in another land.

Eric Blodox was the name of this unfortunate prince; who, in his distresses, had applied to England, where he at first met with a reception fully adequate to his hopes; but, being afterwards neglected, and dreading still worse treatment, he contracted an alliance with the two Earls of Orkney, who joined him readily with a chosen band; and, in a war with England, which he undertook soon afterwards, they all three fell in the same battle, fighting valiantly by each other's side.

Thorfin Hausakliufurs, their brother, now succeeded to the earldom, which, during his whole life, seems to have enjoyed much prosperity and peace.

Nothing, it is probable, tended more to preserve the islands in that prosperous condition, than the eminent talents which he had for command, and the acknowledged excellence of his character. He was a prince of such generosity, as to attach his friends; of a bravery sufficient to intimidate his enemies; and all the virtues which his conduct exhibited were of such a nature, as to conciliate the esteem of his countrymen. Like the rest of the Earls, his fixed and ordinary residence was in Orkney, where he died; and he was buried in Ronaldsay, under a tumulus; which was then known by the name of Haugagerdium; and is perhaps the same with what we now call the How of Hoogfay\*. This extraordinary man had five sons,

\* Ihre: Hoeg, Cumulus.



all of whom survived him ; and by the vicissitudes of their fortune, and the variety of their characters, furnished a much more copious fund of materials for history.

Their names were Arnfin, Havard, Laudver, Liotus, and Sculius. They have made some figure in northern history.

Arnfin married Raguhilda, the daughter of Eric Blodox, the Norwegian prince already mentioned ; and, in a short time, by means of her intrigues, which reflected the utmost disgrace on her sex and her family, he lost his life, and was buried at Murkle in Caithness. His brother Havard now succeeded him ; and managed the estate with such wisdom, as to procure plenty of corn and other provisions for the people, which obtained for him the surname of the Happy ; and this appellation, had it not been for one act of his life, he might have retained to the end of his days. This was his marriage with the ambitious and profligate Raguhilda, whose hands (though perhaps he was ignorant of the circumstance) were yet reeking with his brother's blood. As, in such a character as her's, one crime is only the prelude to another, he had soon ample cause to repent of the imprudent rashness of that step. Her restless spirit soon became wearied of that connexion, that had cost her so many crimes to accomplish ; and perhaps the very virtues of her husband contributed to that effect ; the cause, or the consequence of which was, that she began to place her affections on her brother-in-law Liotus, whom she considered as more agreeable, and more deserving of her heart. In order to rid herself of that husband, whom she now regarded as a bar to her gratifications, she singled out one of his own near relations, whose hopes, in the event of success, she flattered to such a degree, that he soon provoked a quarrel with his uncle, in which Havard was slain. The affray happened in the parish of Stennis ; and on that spot, which afterwards bore the name of Havardztugar, from the event, or the Slaughter.

But even this deed, which involved in it a crime of the deepest dye, she had the consummate art either to conceal, or at least to palliate ; so that, when she communicated her wishes to Liotus, he scrupled not to give his consent : and, marrying her soon afterwards, was raised to the earldom in his brother's stead. He did not, however, long enjoy it in peace. His

brother



brother Sculius, burning with indignation at the base arts by which he had risen to that dignity, and struck with horror at the marriage which he had made, resolved to punish him for the foul stain he had thrown on their family; and, at the same time, to avail himself of his crimes, or his errors, to advance his own interest, or extend his power. Distrusting, however, any means that he was possessed of for the purpose, and despairing of being able to obtain any that would be more effectual while he remained at home, he determined to try the expedient, of interesting in his favour some sovereign power.

An ambitious and potent prince at that time swayed the sceptre in Scotland; and these circumstances, combined with proximity of situation, perhaps first induced him to apply to him. To him he immediately repaired, with a retinue suitable to the object he aimed at, and, without hesitation, disclosed to him his situation and views; and while he solicited his aid to second them, he enlarged on the advantages that would result, from his interference, to his own kingdom; the power of which he was endeavouring so zealously to extend. The King, listening to his representation, was convinced by his arguments, and readily espoused his cause; and first creating him Earl of Orkney, he then promised him such a force as would not only secure him that title, but eventually contribute to render it more than an empty name. As no part of the earldom was at that time dependant on the Crown of Scotland, that Monarch had no right to grant what was not his own; but the title, invalid as it was, when connected with the alliance of a powerful sovereign, and supported, besides, by a military force, had much influence in drawing to his standard many of the inhabitants on his return to the north. In Caithness, therefore, he soon levied an army which he deemed sufficient for his purpose; he embarked them with all expedition, and soon arrived in Orkney, perfectly confident of success.

Liotus had long regarded his brother with a suspicious eye; and, apprised of all his motions, had taken the precaution to arm as many of the people, as would put the islands in a posture of defence; but before he would risk an engagement, by which he had little to gain and much to lose, he listened to the dictates of prudence, in offering what he considered reasonable terms of accommodation. These the haughty and indignant spirit  
of



of his brother rejected with disdain ; a battle was the immediate consequence, in which both sides exhibited prodigies of valour ; till at length Liotus, gaining the superiority, compelled Sculius to fly for safety, and hasten back into that country from which he had last come. Thither Liotus pursued him, as soon as he could collect his forces, and prepare them for the expedition ; but, though he landed without opposition, he spent so much time in Caithness before he brought Sculius to an engagement, that he gave him leisure to receive reinforcements from the Scots ; and to mix and marshal them with his own troops, so as to render the whole more formidable. Both armies were composed of men of more than ordinary courage : their respective leaders were noted for undaunted bravery : and they no sooner met in the dales of Caithness, than an action ensued, as desperate as it was decisive. Before its commencement, Liotus issued an order, which was very uncommon for that age, and strongly marked his character. He commanded his troops to stand firm, and receive the attack of the enemy with coolness ; to parry every blow, and keep themselves on the defensive only ; till their foes should, by the rash impetuosity of their first onset, expend their force ; when, by a well-timed exertion, they might obtain both a more certain and a more easy victory.

The strict discipline, under which his men had for some time been kept, rendered their obedience implicit : they received the first shock of the enemy, which, like that of most barbarians, was violent in the extreme, with unshaken firmness, until they perceived their ardour beginning to cool : when Liotus commanded his troops, now, in their turn, to charge with violence ; which they readily did, in imitation of their brave commander, who, discharging the duty of a soldier, as well as of a general, first threw his enemies into disorder, and soon afterwards put them to flight. Sculius, knowing that every thing he held dear was at stake, performed in this crisis all that could be done by valour ; now exhorting, now beseeching, or threatening, his troops to return and renew the charge ; which he prevailed on them to do for a little ; till, overpowered with numbers, he fell fighting gallantly amidst the thickest ranks of the enemy.

The glory of the day was now left to Liotus, who obtained Caithness as the reward of his valour, which had been so much attached to his brother's interest,



interest, that he was under the necessity of holding it by force of arms. But the success he thus gained was only of short duration. The Scots, as soon as they had time to breathe, became ashamed of their defeat; and recollecting, with a mixture of sorrow and indignation, the slaughter of their countrymen returned with a force far superior to his, under the command of a noble Thane, to recover their honour, and take vengeance. But Liotus, elated with his recent victory, and confident of his own bravery, and that of his islanders, received them with such vigour, that, in a short time, they were compelled to fly, and leave the field of battle, covered with their wounded and slain, in the hands of their victorious enemies. This dreadful conflict was fatal to Liotus; for, though he returned in triumph, he had received in it a wound, which, in a few days, put a period to his existence, and the calamities of his country.

980. Laudver, the only surviving brother of that ambitious, turbulent, and unfortunate family, now entered into possession of the earldom without opposition. He was a man of a bold and active spirit, and much influenced by the love of glory; as appeared from his military achievements, the scene of which lay more frequently abroad than in his own country. The islands that formed the centre of his domain, as well as the provinces in the south that composed its extremity, had been exhausted by those bloody contests in which the discord of his brothers had involved them. They therefore required time to recover strength, after such dismal disasters. But, lest the military spirit, which, in an age like that, was so indispensable for the protection of the people, should become feeble for want of exertion, he frequently revived and strengthened it, by engaging his subjects in some predatory expedition. From such an employment of his time, his talents, and his resources, he ran no risk of incurring dishonour; since the manners of the age gave a sanction to such expeditions, and even rendered them so meritorious, that men of the most splendid fortune, and of the highest rank, and even kings themselves, deemed it honourable occasionally to embark in them.

The theatre he made choice of, on these occasions, on which to exercise his people, and display their military prowess and naval dexterity, was the west coast of Scotland, the western isles, and even sometimes the north and east shores of Ireland.



In some of his excursions into Ireland, he became acquainted with Kiawala, one of the petty kings of that country; and this acquaintance he not long afterwards improved into an alliance, by marrying the celebrated Audna, one of his daughters. This woman, like many of her sex in that age, and among that people, had great spirit and address; was renowned for her extensive acquaintance with many curious arts, and, in particular, for her knowledge of what was then ridiculously styled the science of magic; and the reputation that she had acquired by these means, she had capacity enough to turn to account on some important occasions. By this princess Laudver had a son, whose life was replete with so many important incidents, that they require to be detailed at some length. His father ruled the earldom for the space of sixteen years, during all which he preserved peace, partly by his strict administration of justice, and partly by the fame of his talents and military virtues. His remains were deposited in Caithness.

Sigurd was the name of this son, who now became Earl, in the right of his father. For the sake of distinction he is generally denominated the Gross, either on account of his uncommon height or corpulence. He seems to have been young at his father's death, and therefore could reap little benefit from either his example or instruction; but the loss which he sustained in this respect, was more than made up, by the advantage that he received from the tuition of his mother. She fixed all her hopes and attention on him; and, from the way in which she reared his tender mind, inspiring it with the love of fame, she rendered those qualities, for which he was afterwards distinguished, more early conspicuous. How completely she had gained the ascendant over him, in consequence of her tender care and wise instructions, appeared in an instance that occurred almost on his very entrance into public life. Soon after his father's decease, and before his actions could either develope or confirm his character, he was challenged by a Scottish count, of the name of Finlicus, to fight him on a certain day, and in a place that lay within the precincts of his own earldom. A challenge so unexpected, and so peremptory, threw him into the utmost perplexity. His total inexperience in the field, in which he some day hoped to gather laurels; the small number of forces that could be raised against



the time appointed, and, above all, the painful apprehension he was under of being unfortunate, when setting out in the career of glory, created, for a little, some hesitation. Accustomed long to look up to his mother, in whose capacity he had been taught to repose the most entire confidence, he resolved to consult her in this crisis, and to adhere to her counsel, whatever should be the consequence.

Audua, in pursuance of the plan she had adopted to make her son rival in bravery and success the most renowned of his ancestors, had wrought for him a curious standard, on which she had artfully represented a *black raven* soaring on the winds, and directing his flight to *Heaven*.

This piece of workmanship, at once a proof of her skill, and an emblem of her wishes, she took this opportunity to present to her beloved Sigurd, accompanied with an address conceived in the following remarkable terms : ‘ Accept,’ says she, ‘ this standard, on which I have bestowed all my pains, and all my art ; it will conduct you to victory. From the time you were born, I have felt for you tenderly. Your life has ever been the darling object of my anxious care ; and I could have earnestly wished it had been decreed for ever to continue : but as the fates, and not dangers, have the power of determining the period of human life, it is better to die in youth honourably in the field of battle, than to live to old age, in indolence and disgrace.’

Stung to the heart with these words of his mother, which he considered to be intended, as they undoubtedly were, to rouse his activity and enflame his spirit, he hesitated no longer, but made all the expedition in his power to meet the proud and insulting champion in battle array. But, that he might not be hurried away by youthful ardour, and take the field before he was in a condition to secure success to his arms, and lustre to his character, he exerted himself to the utmost to obtain an adequate force ; and, for this purpose, adopted an expedient as wise as it was effectual.

The lands of many of the most considerable proprietors in the islands had been pledged to Torfeinar, in security for a sum of money which he had paid for them, as has been already mentioned ; and they had continued to that time in the hands of the Earls, his successors, unredeemed. These he generously offered to restore to the descendants of those to whom they  
formerly



formerly belonged, on condition that they would speedily take arms, and, together with their friends and dependants, follow his standard on this pressing occasion. These terms were too favourable to be rejected: they were accepted with joy; the lands were immediately restored; the levies were soon completed, and ready for embarkation; the army, in due time, reached the destined field, where the battle instantly commenced. Both sides, for a while, exerted themselves equally; and victory hovered between them, sometimes inclining to the one side, and sometimes to the other; till at length the pride of the Scottish count was so much humbled, that he was forced to yield, and confess the superior merit of his undaunted foe; and Sigurd, after having lost some of his choicest troops, and three several standard-bearers, (so fatal was the black raven to those that bore him), returned home, covered with laurels.

As this was probably the very first military achievement that he had undertaken, it must have had great influence in augmenting his love of warlike exploits, and no less in raising his hopes of future success: and it is remarkable, that no subsequent action of his life ever contributed to fully the honour which he gained on that day.

In some of the most expressive traits of his character, he seems to have borne a strong resemblance to the first Earl of Orkney, of the same name. Like him, he had a fortitude to support himself under misfortunes with manly dignity. He was as brave in the hour of danger, and as fertile in resources; and, in knowledge in the art of war, and wisdom in the management of civil matters, he was not by any means his inferior. They both discovered greatness of soul, and performed actions equally splendid: fortune was equally constant and propitious to both, in enabling them to gratify their desire of victory and conquest.

This ambitious and powerful Earl obtained possession of many provinces. Over the Shetland and Orkney Isles, which he governed without opposition or controul, he reigned in the affections of the people; and the naval chieftains, through the whole of them, were as ready to support, as to acknowledge his claims: and when either the circumstances of his country, or his own ambition, led him to aspire to conquest, they were, on the shortest notice, prepared to second his views. By means of them, combined with



his own intrepid bands, he frequently harassed the coast of Ireland; and in one of the expeditions which he undertook against the Western Islands, he subdued them, and rendered them tributary to his power. Besides all these, he held under his dominion Caithness and Sutherland, notwithstanding the threats of the Prince who then filled the Scottish throne; and, in contempt of that Monarch, extending his views still farther south, he often made his power felt in Rossshire, Murrayshire, and even in Argyllshire.

Thus widely extended were the territories and power of this Earl, when an event took place in the centre of his earldom, of such an important nature, as to merit particular consideration. This was either the first introduction, or at least the final establishment, of the Christian religion.

Religion, which, in an extensive and abstract point of view, implies the knowledge and adoration of invisible powers, forms a leading article in the history of a people, in so far as it has a tendency to influence, not only their future, but their present state. This it does, by moulding their sentiments, and directing their passions, so as to form their character, which is derived, in a great measure, from the opinions which they entertain respecting the objects of their worship; and is either mild, humble, and merciful, or bold, stern and unrelenting, as they believe the former or the latter of these qualities to be the principal attributes of their Gods.

The genius of that superstition which prevailed among the first inhabitants, bears evident marks of belonging to the latter class. The grand object of their worship, like the Mars of the Greeks and the Romans, delighted in the field of battle. Here was the temple dedicated to his worship; the din of arms was esteemed the music most delightful to his ears; his eyes were feasted with human blood; those that fell were so many victims on his altars; and the paradise that he had prepared for them, contained pleasures in every respect similar to his own.

Hence these worshippers of ODIN were taught, from their earliest youth, to consider military skill as the perfection of human knowledge, and the warlike virtues alone, as deserving cultivation, since they constituted the only real and substantial excellence of man. Their future lives testified plainly the influence of such instruction; for their constant practice was, not



to despise, but even to court dangers, in which their prowess or their fortitude might be advantageously displayed. Generosity seldom failed to adorn their character as a concomitant virtue; the love of fame was their ruling passion; and their utter contempt of death would have been incredible, had we not known, that when it came from the hand of an enemy, it was deemed a passport into the *blissful abode*.

To men like these, the prominent features of whose character were formed by the influence of such a wild and daring superstition, Christianity could be no very acceptable guest. The exact time when that divine light first shone on this people, cannot now be perfectly ascertained. As soon as the inhabitants of the nearest southern county were converted, they would, from the intercourse that must have subsisted between them, naturally diffuse the principles of the new system over the opposite shores; but its progress must have been slow, as the meek and humble temper of Christianity, and the benevolent and merciful spirit which it breathes, were almost in direct opposition to that proud and sanguinary superstition which already had such a firm hold on their hearts.

The teachers, whose zeal brought them from the south to propagate the new opinions, would not, it is probable, at first, be very well received, as their doctrines opposed rooted prejudices, and their manners were by no means such as to ensure reverence, among a people of such a disposition. An ignorant zeal, perhaps, was the only quality which they had to recommend them, together with some degree of sanctity of manners; and these qualities must have lost almost all their influence, as they were accompanied with neither taste nor genius, liberality of sentiment, nor a competent degree of erudition. Together with zeal and sanctity, which ought not to be wanting, enlargement of mind, intellectual acuteness and vigour, associated with prudence and perseverance, are essential requisites in those who would successfully guide the passions, and direct the opinions of men.

Some time before the end of the sixth century, when St. Columba was 570. on his mission to the Pictish King, he saw a Prince of Orkney, whose protection and support he implored in behalf of some monks of his order, who were then on their way to preach the gospel in his islands\*. The request,

\* Adamnan, Vit. St. Columbæ.



it is probable, was granted; and the monks, consequently, came and exerted themselves in the instruction of the people, which they would perhaps do with more effect, as they acted under the auspicious influence of sovereign authority.

A whole century, indeed, before, St. Servanus is said to have been commissioned to diffuse among them the light of truth, and St. Colm afterwards to have laboured for the same pious and benevolent purpose; but, if either of these saints was ever here with such views, (which is at least doubtful), we have reason to believe his exertions were not extensively successful.

Christianity, some years before this period, had become the religion of Norway, by means of Olaus Frigueson, who then filled the throne. This celebrated Prince, being in his youth converted in England \*, seems to have bestowed on it such attention, as enabled him to perceive its excellence; and he soon became inspired with all the zeal of a new convert, to spread its principles through distant lands. For this end he prepared five or six ships, on board of which he invited such wise and learned men as he deemed best qualified to diffuse the knowledge of his favourite system; and sailed directly for Ireland, with which his country had then an intimate connexion. His transactions there are foreign to our purpose; but, on his return, he brought his squadron to anchor in one of the harbours of South Ronaldsay, where the Earl then was, in readiness for some expedition. Sigurd was of an open and unsuspicious temper, which arose from confidence in the strength of his arms, and in the magnitude of his fame. He beheld, therefore, the approach of the Norwegian fleet without apprehension; nor did he hesitate to go on board as soon as he received the King's invitation, as he dreaded no harm, and supposed, perhaps, that a conference only was wanted, respecting some military enterprise, in which the interest of both of them might be equally concerned. The King's conduct, however, soon convinced him of his mistake; for scarcely had they met together, when Olaus, assuming an air of anxious dignity, opened his design in the following terms: 'It cannot have escaped you, that, as heir to Harold Harfager, I have an undoubted right to the sovereignty of these islands, over which you pre-

\* Mallet's History of Denmark.

' side;



‘ side ; and you must, moreover, be sensible, that both you yourself, and  
‘ your fortune, are now in my power : but I am so far from wishing to  
‘ avail myself of these circumstances to your detriment, that I am inclined  
‘ to promote your best interest, and to unite you and myself together in still  
‘ firmer bonds. For this end, my proposal is, that you, and all your people,  
‘ shall instantly adopt the Christian religion, receive the holy rite of  
‘ baptism, and acknowledge me as your liege lord ; and, on condition that  
‘ you comply with this proposal, you shall secure my friendship ever afterwards ;  
‘ and, what is of far more consequence, the everlasting friendship  
‘ of the Sovereign of Heaven. But if you and your people refuse compliance,  
‘ I am determined to desolate your country, and inflict on all of  
‘ you the punishment of death ; and you will have just cause to expect,  
‘ hereafter, a punishment infinitely more dreadful, from the hand of an  
‘ offended God.’

The Earl, though confounded at this unexpected overture, and still more at the menaces with which it was attended in case of refusal, yet retained his recollection, and made this firm and spirited reply : ‘ I cannot, O King,  
‘ suffer myself to renounce that religion which has been sanctioned by custom,  
‘ and which I received from my ancestors, as I consider myself as no  
‘ wiser than they ; and no reasons have as yet been offered to convince me,  
‘ that the religion which you thus recommend for my adoption, is in any  
‘ respect better than my own.’

The King had neither time nor inclination to produce any other arguments than those he had used, on similar occasions, in his own country ; the arguments of intolerant zeal and despotic power. He therefore drew his sword ; and, laying hold of the Earl’s son, Hundius, whom his father had carried on board with him, declared, in the most determined manner, that he would instantly plunge it into the youth’s bosom, if his father hesitated any longer ; and at the same time added, that his fate should only be the forerunner of what all those should suffer, who refused to adopt the principles of this religion, which he himself professed. Convinced that an absolute refusal, or even any longer hesitation or delay, would have been the certain means of involving himself, his family and country, in one common ruin, Sigurd yielded to the imperious dictates of Olaus, whom he now acknowledged as his Sovereign ; publicly professed his Christian faith, and received



ceived baptism ; and the people followed the example of their Earl, with one accord. The King, exulting in the success of his pious enterprize, now returned home, carrying Hundius along with him as an hostage ; and, on his departure, left some learned men to instruct the inhabitants in the nature of that religion which he had thus planted with the point of the sword. Hundius soon afterwards died, while he was yet an hostage ; and the Earl, considering this event as dissolving entirely his connexion with that monarch, contracted an alliance in another quarter, by marrying, as his second wife, a daughter of Malcolm King of Scotland.

It was neither the lot nor the disposition of this Earl to be long in a state of inactivity, or to indulge himself in repose. A few years only had elapsed after this new connexion, before a war broke out, arising from some domestic causes among some of the petty princes of Ireland ; and Sigurd was too well known, too much esteemed, and had, at that time, too great influence in the north, to be suffered to remain an unconcerned spectator of their contests. Allured by great promises, and flushed with the hopes of still farther augmenting his fame, he entered into an alliance against Brian, King of Dublin, and without delay prepared to embark for that country. Before his departure, he had the prudence to arrange and settle the affairs of his family, by committing the charge of the earldom to Sumarlid, Einar, and Brusius, the sons of his first marriage ; the young Thorfin, his only son by the Scottish princess, being put under the guardianship of his royal grandfather. The fatal event of this expedition showed but too plainly the wisdom of these precautions ; for the unfortunate Earl, after he had displayed his wonted bravery in the support of his ally, fell in the famous battle of  
1014. *Clontarf*, to the unspeakable loss of his friends, and much lamented by his countrymen.

He was a man of too much fame, and too splendid talents, not to have his death, in the fond credulity of that age, attended with prodigies. Of these there were several that happened in places widely distant ; two of which we shall select, as descriptive of the times.

A man of some note, of the name of Marcus, had been anxious to be employed in that enterprize ; but the Earl declined accepting his services on that occasion, telling him he wished rather he would remain at home ; and that he should be the very first man to whom he would communicate the  
event



event of the expedition. Much about the time of the battle, this man, with several others, saw plainly, as he imagined, the Earl at no great distance riding towards him, at the head of a troop of horse; upon which Marcus mounted his own horse on purpose to meet him: they were seen to approach each other, to meet, to embrace, and, afterwards riding up to a rising ground, they disappeared; and no vestige of either of them was ever seen afterwards.

That in Caithness was still more remarkable. About the same time, a native there, of the name of Darradus, imagined that he saw what he conceived to be a number of men riding up to, and entering a hill near his dwelling; and that he might be in no mistake, he went to the place, and perceiving a chink in the side of the hill, he looked through it, and saw twelve women weaving a web in a very strange loom, and of as strange materials; and as they wrought, they sung, in the Danish language, a dreadful song—‘How hapless had been the fate of the Earl of Orkney\*.’

The Earl’s fate was no sooner known, than his three eldest sons divided equally among them the islands of Orkney and Shetland, leaving to their younger brother Thorfin, who, on account of his youth, had been put under guardians, the provinces of Caithness and Sutherland, which were confirmed to him by his grandfather the King of Scotland, who conferred on him, at the same time, the title and dignity of an Earl. Even at a very early period of his life, Thorfin discovered but too plainly the symptoms of a covetous spirit: his genius, as he advanced in years, was bold and extensive; and he was far more addicted to war, than inclined to cultivate those arts of peace that promote the happiness of a country.

The characters of the three elder brothers were different from his, and also from one another. Einar was constantly aspiring after vast objects: he had a severe and stern countenance, and a harsh and discordant manner of speech; his temper was unrelenting; and he had a propensity to warlike enterprise, that was inconsistent with the rights of humanity. In almost all these respects the character of Brusius was different; for he was mild and

\* This song in the original was published by Bartholin, Ant. Dan.; translated into Latin by Torseus; and has, in our own times, been rendered famous, by its translation in Mr. Gray’s sublime *Ode of the Fatal Sisters*. The women that sung the song were the Valkers, in northern mythology, whom Odin employed to choose in battle those that were to be slain, to conduct them to his hall, and to furnish them with every luxury.—*Vid. App. No. X.*



gentle, contented and modest; a lover of peace and equity; and, in most of these, and in some other of his qualities, he bore a very strong resemblance to his elder brother.

1014. Sumarlid was that brother who, during the short time he lived, discovered some very amiable qualities. Like his brother, his temper was meek; he loved peace and retirement; his speech was fluent, and his manners polished to a degree uncommon in that age of ferocity. But these qualities, pleasant as they were, and profitable as they might have been to his people in other circumstances, did not qualify him to act his part with advantage, among ambitious, rude, and turbulent neighbours. He knew well the aspiring genius, and the restless and haughty spirit of one of his brothers: he was no stranger to the extensive talents, the grasping avarice, and the powerful connexions of the other: and from these causes he saw a storm gathering, that must, without question, destroy his tranquillity. His constitution seems to have been always feeble; and perhaps this view of the troubles in which he was soon likely to be involved, might have operated in creating, or at least in accelerating that distemper which soon put an end to his days. As he died without issue, that part of the islands which belonged to him, in consequence of the agreement entered into at his father's death, soon became the object of contest to the surviving brothers.

Einar, by the rules of succession that are now generally established, had an undoubted right to the estate of his elder brother. Thorfin, however, indulging his natural disposition, laid claim to it as his property, and insisted on his right; while his elder brother Brusius, whose right was preferable, relinquished any claim he might have, in order to preserve peace. Einar, who was of no such tame, pacific disposition, maintained his right with resolution; and at last seized the lands, which he kept by force of arms; and by this accession of property, added much both to his wealth and his power. He had now two thirds of what might be reckoned the Earl's property, in both the Orkney and Shetland Isles; and the revenue that he drew from it was very considerable, though altogether inadequate to satisfy his desires. His constant practice, therefore, was to oppress the people, by new and unreasonable exactions; and by carrying off from their peaceful labours, the choicest of their young men, to employ them in his wild, ill-concerted piratical expeditions.

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The inhabitants, as they had just reason, murmured first in secret, for the loss of their sons and their substance; they afterwards complained bitterly, and aloud, of their cruel treatment; and endeavoured, by various means, to excite his justice, or his mercy, to take into consideration their condition, and grant them redress. But their attempts were vain, till first a dearth and scarcity, and then even a famine, happened in his lands; while the territory of his brother Brusius enjoyed the inestimable blessings of plenty and peace.

At Lopendisness, in the parish of Sandwick, there was at that time a man whose name was Amundius, distinguished much for his wealth, and no less for his wisdom and his power. He had a son named Thorkel, who was the exact image of his father in all the virtues of his mind. To Amundius, who had hitherto some share of the Earl's confidence, the people looked up in this extremity, earnestly soliciting his interposition in their behalf, in order to free them from those calamities which they were no longer able to bear. Listening to their solicitations with attention, he would have gladly gratified his propensity to compassion, by interposing to procure them relief; but, from a knowledge of the man whom he had to deal with, he declined any interference between them and their superior, as what would certainly draw down on him the Earl's vengeance, without procuring them any mitigation of their distress.

Disappointed in their hopes from that quarter, they next applied to his son Thorkel, who at first saw many difficulties; all of which he endeavoured afterwards to surmount; and, espousing their cause with the boldness of youth, and the generosity of a noble character, he represented their miseries in such strong and glowing colours, as seemed for a little to touch the tyrant's heart; and drew from him concessions that promised, if not the removal, at least an alleviation of their calamity. But when oppressions were renewed with fresh severity, and the remonstrances of this zealous advocate were proportionally warm, it was industriously rumoured abroad, in no ambiguous terms, that if he persisted longer in his importunate solicitations, he might expect to pay for his audacity with the forfeiture of his life. Knowing the Earl to be inexorable, and his resentment to be without bounds, Thorkel listened to the advice of his father, to avoid the impending storm, by leaving his own country, and going over to Caithness. There he con-



tinued for a long time ; and, by his talents and his virtues, recommended himself so effectually, as to be entrusted with the education of the young Earl ; and, from this circumstance, obtained the surname of Foster, which he ever afterwards retained.

As soon as Thorfin his pupil became of age, he dispatched messengers to his brother Einar, to demand from him his third part of the islands ; and when he refused to comply with that requisition, he came over himself, furnished with such a force as was necessary to support his claim.

Einar, on the other hand, made vigorous preparations to oppose him, and preserve what he reckoned his own rights ; and, had it not been for the pacific spirit of Brusius, who seasonably interposed as a mediator between the two brothers, they would have, in a short time, come to extremities, and involved themselves and their country in ruin. This consequence of their dispute, that good man foresaw and dreaded ; and his regard for peace and the interests of the people, induced him to exert his utmost efforts to settle their respective claims ; which he had the good fortune at length to do, on these terms :—That Thorfin should have a third part of Orkney and Shetland, in addition to the provinces of Caithness and Sutherland, which he already possessed : that Einar and Brusius should have two thirds of the islands, which they were to join together as one estate, to be put under the management of Einar, who became bound for its defence : and, lastly, that of these two last, the surviving brother should, without molestation, enjoy the estates of both.

This transaction was no sooner finished, than Thorfin put his share of the islands under the direction of commissioners, and returned to Caithness, where he resided for the most part, as he had done before. As soon as his rents became due, he commissioned Thorkel Foster to collect them ; whose life, while he was in the execution of this piece of duty, was again threatened by Einar, under the pretence of his having advised his pupil to claim a part of his estate, to which, he contended, he could have no just pretension. Thorkel, being apprised of his design, finished his business as quickly as possible ; returned home ; informed Thorfin of the imminent risk he had run ; and added, that rather than be in constant dread of a tyrant's resentment, it was better to live an exile in a foreign country. The Earl concurred with him in opinion, as to this point ; and recommended Norway



as a place for this purpose, equally convenient and honourable. Thither, in compliance with his advice, Thorkel went immediately; and, as he was deficient neither in talents nor address, he soon insinuated himself so much into the favour of Olave, the reigning monarch, that he both admitted him into his councils, and entrusted him with affairs of the utmost importance.

During his residence at that Court, he frequently took occasion to mention Earl Thorfin, and to extol his capacity and his virtues; and such influence had this on the King, that, as soon as the spring season arrived, he invited him over into his kingdom. The Earl, sensible of the honour that was done him, and thinking that he might at some future period turn it to account, accepted the invitation, was graciously received, nobly entertained, and much respected in the palace; and when the time had come for his departure, he was presented with a stately galley to carry him back to his own country. Thorkel Foster, his friend and former tutor, determined to accompany him, and received, in a present, Thorfin's galley for that purpose. While anticipating the pleasure which they expected soon to enjoy with their friends, their hopes were nearly blasted by the insidious conduct of Einar, who had collected troops, and stood ready to oppose their landing, or interrupt their return. In this emergency, the benevolent and pacific Brusius again interposed; and when matters were likely to come to an extremity, had the good fortune to effect a reconciliation. The means made use of for this purpose, appear to have been at the same time so judicious and so seasonable, that the Earl pretended to have forgotten his resentment against Thorkel; while Thorkel had, in reality, forgiven him; and both were, by the same mediation, prevailed with to bury their enmities, and seal their agreement, by mutually giving and receiving an entertainment. Thorkel began with alacrity; and was afterwards to attend the Earl home; where he expected that suitable preparations would be made to regale him in return.

The feast given by Thorkel was at his house in Sandwick; in which there was a large hall, with a fireplace in the middle, and two doors opposite to each other. Here a magnificent entertainment was prepared; all were treated with due respect; and nothing was omitted that could do honour to

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the Earl ; who, notwithstanding the general joy, remained sad, and by the fixed severity of his countenance, but too plainly shewed that he was forming some dark plot in his malignant heart. This sullen humour, together with what was known to be his ordinary disposition, naturally created fears ; so that when the feast was over, and they were about to repair to the Earl's palace, Thorkel prudently framed some excuse for delay, till he dispatched confidential servants to examine the road ; who soon returned with intelligence, that in three several places they found armed men in ambush, evidently with a design to take away their master's life. Delay would now have been hazardous. His determination was, of consequence, soon taken ; and, in order to preserve his own life, he found himself under the necessity of destroying his enemy and the tyrant of his country.

Brufius, now that his brother Einar was removed, claimed the two thirds of the islands, in consequence of the stipulations formerly entered into,—that the estate of him who died first should belong to the surviving brother. To this claim Thorfin entered objections, on the ground, that they had no right to frame a contract that might deprive him of what he reckoned a part of his inheritance ; and therefore demanded one half of the whole ; which, on the part of his opponent, was refused ; and as some circumstances occurred to suspend the competition, Brufius got possession of his late brother's property, which he retained for one or two years.

To decide this contest, which had only suffered some interruption, a general meeting of their mutual friends was convened ; who exerted their utmost endeavour for this purpose, but without effect ; for, while the one party insisted on having the subject in question as his share of his father's property, the other contended, that, in virtue of the contract, it was his undoubted right ; and, as neither discovered the least inclination to make any concessions, the meeting broke up, without being able to bring to an amicable issue the matter in dispute. The difference now began to wear a more serious aspect ; and would, in all probability, have soon come to the decision of the sword, had the contending parties been in similar circumstances, or nearly equal in many respects.

Thorfin, besides being a man of great capacity, and fond of bold enterprise, had an extensive property elsewhere, as well as one third of the islands ;



islands; and was, moreover, on every pressing occasion, certain of being supported by his royal grandfather. To all these advantages Brusius was no stranger; he had considered them with attention, and allowed them their due weight; and, rather than run the risk of coming to an open rupture with one who was so much his superior, he followed the bent of his inclination in adopting an expedient that promised him success. He left his own country for a little, and repaired to the Court of Norway, taking along with him his son Ronald, a youth of about ten years of age. There he met with a reception suitable to his exalted dignity and amiable character.

As soon as Thorfin became acquainted with his departure, he readily perceived the cause; and being apprehensive that his being there before him might be detrimental to his interest, he made all the haste he possibly could to arrive in that country. As soon as he had set his foot on shore, he hastened to the capital, and was introduced into the royal presence in due form. Both brothers had gone to that kingdom with a view to submit their differences to the same decision. After some hesitation and delay, they were settled in this manner: The King, who was the sole arbiter, and had power sufficient to enforce his decree, adjudged two thirds of the islands to Brusius, and one third to Thorfin; and, at the same time, recommended so warmly Thorkel Foster, who had, on some occasion, incurred the displeasure of the Earls, that they received him again into favour; upon which he returned into his own country, and spent the remainder of his days with Earl Thorfin in Caithness.

Many destructive wars soon afterwards broke out, which convulsed the various branches of the earldom; amidst which Brusius henceforth remained an indifferent spectator, having retired to the north isles, where he indulged his pacific disposition in quiet solitude; and died while Canute the Great was King of Norway, Denmark, and England. His death removed all opposition to his brother's views; so that he now got entire possession of the islands.

Thorfin, during the life of his grandfather, by whom he had been confirmed in the earldom, enjoyed it in comfort and peace. But, after his death, his successor to the crown of Scotland demanded from him tribute;



and on his refusal to pay it, the King created his own sister's son Moddan, earl in his stead; and, to support the dignity to which he had raised him, granted him the counties of Caithness and Sutherland. In order to take possession of his new dignity, and his new estate, Moddan in a short time marched to the north; and that he might secure his object, he levied soldiers in the provinces through which he went; so that, by the time he reached Caithness, he had collected under his command no inconsiderable military force. Thorfin, enraged at the treatment which he had met with, was neither blind to his motions, nor dilatory in taking those measures that were necessary for his own defence. He had lately collected in Caithness, on the spur of the occasion, what men he could; and when he had received a strong reinforcement from Orkney, under the command of his confidential friend Thorkel, he was not only in a condition to meet the enemy in the field, but even of force sufficient to give him the prospect of victory. The Scots seem to have been sensible of this; for instead of advancing, as they intended, to the extremity of the north, on learning the nature of the resistance they were likely to meet with, they retreated with the utmost speed into the heart of the kingdom, to procure such aid as might enable them to face a foe whom they had been taught to dread. The Earl, pursuing them through the northern counties, hastened their flight; and having taken vengeance on such of the inhabitants as had revolted, or joined the standard of the enemy, he returned to Caithness, and residing at Dungsbay, he kept in readiness a fleet of five ships and a part of his land forces, and sent the remainder of the army over into Orkney.

In the mean time, Moddan, on his return to the south, represented, in such strong terms, the depredations that had been committed by the enemy in some of the provinces, that he was, with all expedition, furnished with a formidable army, which he was commanded to march to the north by land; while a fleet of eleven sail, under the command of Karl, was instructed to cruise along the coast, to be ready to co-operate with them; and the commanders of both had agreed to endeavour to surprise Thorfin, and to encompass him in such a manner as to render his escape almost impracticable. But however well concerted their plans were, or secretly conducted, they did not elude the penetration and vigilance of their sagacious



cious enemy. No sooner did he receive certain intelligence of the strength of the armament that was preparing to attack him, than he determined, in his present circumstances, not to risk an engagement, but embarked his troops, and crossed the frith towards Orkney, where he had no doubt of soon procuring both men and ships, which would enable him to put an end to the present warfare.

Karl perceived clearly his design ; and confiding in the superior number and size of his ships, no less than in the strength of his land forces, pursued them with such expedition, that with some difficulty he reached the Mull of Deerness, where he landed late at night, and dispatched orders to Thorkel to raise as many men as he could, and join him with the utmost possible expedition. Thorfin spent that night in painful suspense and anxiety ; for, though he knew that the enemy were in pursuit of him, he was uncertain how near they were, or whether they were before or behind him. The morning delivered him from this state of doubt ; for Karl, who had lost sight of him in the night, discovered his ships by break of day, came upon him by surprise, and prepared to attack him with violence.

Few situations could be more dangerous than that in which he now was placed. He saw plainly the superiority of the Scots in point of numbers, and he could entertain no reasonable hope of quickly procuring from the islands such a reinforcement as might extricate him from his present difficulty. When he had weighed these circumstances, he was in doubt whether to abandon his ships and consult the safety of his men by flight, or instantly to engage, whatever might be the consequence. His sense of honour, and his valour, determined him to engage: he made a concise and impressive speech, in which he exhorted his men to strike the first blow with such fury, as might throw the enemy into irretrievable disorder.

His orders were cheerfully and punctually obeyed: the men ply their oars ; lash their ships to those of the enemy ; fly to arms ; and attack them with such impetuous ardour, as strikes them with astonishment and terror. Thorfin had directed his aim principally against the ship of the admiral ; on board of which, in a short time, there were many killed and wounded. As soon as he observed this, he snatched the standard of his own ship, with which he rushed on board that of the enemy, and compelled the admiral



himself, and the few that were alive, to leap on board the nearest vessel. This being seen by the rest of the fleet, the whole fled in the utmost confusion, and left him the glory of the day, and a victory easily gained.

Thorfin, elated with such unexpected success, and wishing to gain a still farther advantage, pursued them with the utmost activity: but his efforts in this respect were unavailing; since they fled with so great precipitation, that he could not entertain hopes of being able successfully to follow them. As soon as he found his attempts to overtake them ineffectual, he returned to Orkney, where he met Thorkel Foster, at the head of a choice army, which he had raised in the islands, in consequence of the orders sent him from Deerness.

In the mean time, notice was brought them that Moddan was still in Caithness, had his head quarters in Thurso, and was harassing the inhabitants greatly, by plundering the country all around him. To check and punish such disorders, Thorkel was commanded to sail for Caithness, which he did without delay; and having marched through it with much speed and secrecy, he reached Thurso before the enemy was aware of his approach; surprised the earl in the dead of night, by setting fire to his lodgings; and while he was endeavouring to escape from them, his head was struck off; and his army thrown into consternation, were either cut to pieces, surrendered themselves prisoners of war, or fled for safety to the inaccessible fens and mountains. The Scots, who had met with such a shameful defeat at Deerness, began, after their return to the south, to think of the loss of their honour, and, wishing earnestly to retrieve it, they returned in full force into Caithness. Here they were joined by troops from Ireland, that had been sent, though too late, to reinforce the army of Moddan; and these, when united, far exceeded in number any army that the earl could bring into the field against them. But, notwithstanding their superiority, he was neither of a temper to permit them to ravage his country with impunity, nor was it either his inclination or his practice to decline accepting their offers of an engagement. The two hostile armies therefore prepared for action: they met in battle array on a promontory near to, and in full view of the harbour of Thurso: the Earl of Orkney took his station in the front line, with a gilded helmet on his head, a sword by his side, and a large spear in both hands,



hands, with which he did great execution; and, in the very first onset, bent his whole force, with such intrepid ardour, against the Irish, that he compelled them to fall back, and so entirely broke their ranks, that it was not afterwards in the power of their commander to rally them.

The same valour and masterly conduct were displayed by the brave general of the Scottish forces. He also fought in the front of his army, in the hottest of the battle, inspiring courage by his example, relieving them that were overpowered, and directed his attacks principally against that part of the line of the enemy which was distinguished by the Earl's presence. In this manner did both sides fight for some time, with almost equal bravery and equal success; till the Earl, by a desperate attack, made the Scots waver between hope and despair, then sensibly retreat, and at last fly, and leave the field of battle strewed with the wounded and slain.

By these, and such like means, did he rise to great power and wealth: he far exceeded in splendour, not only his predecessors, Earls of Orkney, but even many potent kings themselves; for, while they entertained their nobles during Christmas, Thorfin feasted his friends through the whole winter.

Ronald, the son of Brusius, and grandson of the celebrated Sigurd, had been carried over at an early period to Norway, where he received an excellent education, by which he so much profited, that he was in a short time distinguished among the young nobility, not only for the strength and beauty of his person, and the gracefulness of his air, but for many mental accomplishments, some of which were not then common.

As soon as he heard of his father's death, and that his uncle had taken possession of all the islands, he formed the design of visiting his native country. This he took the first occasion to communicate to Magnus, who, on the death of his father Olave, had now ascended the throne; and as he was in great favour with that monarch, he found little difficulty in obtaining his permission. Previously to his departure, that he might appear in his own country with more dignity, he created him an earl; granted him that third of the islands which Olave had conferred on his father; and, moreover, presented him with three excellent galleys, sufficiently stored with provisions, and suitably manned for the voyage.



After all things were ready, and Magnus had requested that he would apply to him for what he might stand in need of in future, they embraced each other tenderly, and took leave. The amiable young earl sailed directly for Orkney, to take a view of his patrimonial estate. Having remained there for a short time, he sent messengers to Thorfin, who was then in the Western Isles, settling some difference that had arisen among the chieftains, to demand restitution of that part of the islands which King Olave had granted his father, and his son Magnus had now confirmed to himself. To this requisition, which seemed to be founded in justice, Thorfin replied, that, as for that third of the estate which had originally been his father's property, he had no manner of objection to his taking immediate possession: but, to the other third, he could claim no right whatever; neither could the kings of Norway, with any colour of justice, confer it on him: but, if he would be his friend, and occasionally give him that aid which a relation ought, he would think that third also well bestowed on him. This, he added, he might instantly occupy, as probably he would soon stand in need of his assistance, which he valued more than any benefit that he could reap from that part of his territory.

Ronald, whose disposition was naturally open and unsuspecting, was satisfied with his uncle's conduct; and though he demanded nothing but what he considered himself as having a just right to, he promised fidelity and assistance; and thus, without any farther trouble, got, for the present, quiet possession of two thirds of the whole islands.

Agreeably to the spirit of the times, many schemes of depredation were planned and adopted, in which they were both concerned. In the summer, they made frequent excursions to the west coast of Scotland, to the adjacent isles, to Ireland, and even sometimes to England itself; and, from these expeditions, they both acquired riches and naval fame. Every enterprize was conducted by Thorfin; his nephew fulfilled his engagement, by contributing his aid; and every exploit that was performed, testified plainly that the leaders cultivated between them that harmony, which was as honourable, as advantageous, to both.

But, unfortunately, in a short time, evil counsellors, in order to ingratiate themselves with their respective patrons, shamefully abused their confidence, and created dissensions between the two princes.

About



About that time, Kalfus Avnin, who had held an office of the first trust in his country, and had been suspected of a crime, had, in order to shun investigation, or avoid punishment, departed, as a voluntary exile, from Norway. As he was a man of great wealth, he had many friends and dependants, who embarked with him to share his fortune; and as the celebrated Ingibjorg, wife of Thorfin, was his brother's daughter, he, with his numerous train, repaired to the Earl's court, where he was courteously entertained, for a long time, in the most splendid manner. But the expence occasioned by the support of such grandeur, was very great: and joined to what had been laid out in some piratical expeditions, that had failed of success, had so emptied the Earl's coffers, that he began to be unable to live in that sumptuous style to which he had been accustomed. In this exigence, influenced by the advice of some of his retainers, he resolved to recal that third of the islands, which he had rather permitted Earl Ronald to occupy, than ever regularly conveyed; and for that end dispatched messengers, who were instructed to make the requisition.

Ronald, as might have been expected, refused to comply, and returned such reasons for his refusal, as incensed the haughty spirit of his uncle, and determined him to prosecute more vigorously his claim. Much fruitless negotiation was entered into. An open rupture at length took place, when both parties came to the final resolution of deciding, by force of arms, what it seemed now impossible to decide by other means.

A large army was soon levied, and in readiness for that purpose. A fleet, consisting of sixty ships, was fitted out to convey them over; and, in sailing from Caithness, they met in the Pentland Frith, Earl Ronald, with a squadron of thirty ships only, but of much greater size. The line of battle was soon formed, according to the custom of the age. They fought valiantly; and, for some time, it was difficult to determine to which side victory leaned; till at last it declared for Ronald, on account of the superior bulk and height of his vessels, from which his men threw their weapons both with more violence, and a much surer aim. Thorfin now saw that conquest was impracticable, unless he was reinforced; and, finding that the killed and wounded on board his ship were an incumbrance in the action, he put them ashore, and among them placed his scald, or bard,

Avnor,



Avnor, that he might be in safety to observe the fate of the day, and transmit its heroic deeds to posterity. After he had made this arrangement, he looked to his friend Avnin, who, with six ships, in excellent condition, had hitherto lain by an indifferent spectator, and prevailed with him to combine his force; which he had no sooner done, than he returned to the charge with fresh vigour. Ronald's fleet for some time sustained their united efforts with undaunted bravery, till the squadron of Avnin had made such dreadful avock in several of the ships, that few men were left alive. Some of the ships were then taken, some shattered, some fled, and only a very few remained to support Ronald who intrepidly kept his station, and fought desperately to the close of the day; when, giving up all for lost, he escaped in the night, and sailed directly for Norway.

King Magnus heard, with unfeigned sorrow, the news of his defeat, and both solaced his spirit, and revived his hopes, by assuring him, that, as early in the spring as it was convenient to take the sea, he should be furnished with such a military and naval force as could scarcely fail to humble his haughty relation, and re-establish him in his possessions. Such uncommon generosity met with his cordial thanks; but Ronald preferred one stout ship, with which he might sail in winter, in order to arrive in Orkney suddenly, and take Thorfin by surprise, before he was aware of his approach. This was immediately procured him, furnished with suitable stores, and manned with a chosen band, many of them men of the first rank and fortune, as well as spirit, in the court of Magnus, who rejoiced to embark in such a hazardous enterprize; not so much with a design to display their own valour, as to do justice to their much esteemed and injured friend.

As soon as he arrived in Shetland, he received intelligence that Thorfin, trusting to his late victory, and also to the season of the year, had dismissed most of his men, and was, with a few only, revelling in the mainland, probably at Birsa, without the smallest apprehension of danger. Pleased with this information, he hastened to the place; landed in the night, before any notice had been given of his arrival; surrounded the house with his guards, and then set fire to it while all were in bed, except the attendants of the Earl, who, with his wife in his arms, escaped amidst the general confusion, and fled to Caithness. There he lurked, for some time, so privately among  
his



his friends, that doubts were entertained whether he had not fallen among the slain, or been consumed in the conflagration; and Ronald, in the mean time, exacted his revenues, not only through the isles, and the Scottish provinces in the north, but from the Hæbudæ, and his estate in Ireland. The young Earl, in the mean time, had made choice of Kirkwall as the place of his residence, in preference to any other, on account of its central situation, for receiving intelligence; and képt with him there a numerous and splendid train of attendants. Along with some of these he sailed to the north isles, on purpose to carry from Papay-Westray a cargo of malt, to make ale, their favourite beverage, to regale them during the approaching festival of Yule, or Christmas. The night he was there, while sitting till it was late by the fire with his companions, indulging in mirth and conversation, he was suddenly and unexpectedly alarmed by Thorfin and his men, in arms, investing the house, and setting fire to it; and though, by means of great strength and agility, he made his escape for the present, he was soon afterwards discovered by the barking of his own dog, taken together with his companions, and butchered without mercy. His remains were gathered up with pious care, carried over to Westray, and interred amidst the lamentations of the inhabitants.

Ronald was by far the most accomplished of any of the Earls of Orkney. His stature was above the ordinary size, and his limbs were well proportioned. He had thick flaxen hair, a pleasant countenance, a majestic and graceful mien, and a very uncommon degree of strength and agility. To these endowments of body, he added many that were mental; for he was sagacious and penetrating, bold, firm, and just; and, in short, wanted scarcely any thing, but constancy of fortune, to render him a very exalted character.

Thorfin, having now a second time got rid of every obstacle to his peaceful enjoyment of the whole earldom, either dreaded the resentment, or coveted the alliance of Norway; and therefore made all the dispatch he possibly could, to cultivate the King's favour in his own country. During the time he remained there, he seems to have been employed in no active business, but had leisure to reflect on his past conduct, when many instances of injustice and cruelty presented themselves, and awakened his conscience.



In order to atone for his crimes, he resolved to undertake a journey to Rome, and obtain papal absolution. His design being known, and things in readiness, before he took his leave, he received some valuable presents from Harold. From Sweno, King of Denmark, too, he met with a very favourable reception; and, as he travelled through Saxony, he received, among other marks of respect, some fine horses from the Emperor Henry, to carry him to Italy. Having arrived at Rome, and being introduced to his Holiness, he found no difficulty in procuring a plenary pardon of his sins. He was soon, in his own estimation, cleansed from all guilt; upon which he returned with all speed to Orkney, where he entirely changed his mode of life, and became as famous for the pacific, as he had formerly been for the warlike virtues. Birsa was the place where he spent most of the remainder of his days, in the administration of justice, and in framing many wise and salutary laws for the good of the people; and, that he might direct their views beyond the present state, he erected there a magnificent church, which he dedicated to Christ as the first fruits of his piety. But, while he attended to those objects that promote internal prosperity, he also took care to protect his subjects from foreign invasion, and kept his whole territories, scattered and extensive as they were, in due subjection to himself. This he found very little difficulty in doing, as his power far exceeded that of any of his predecessors. He retained it undiminished to the last, and died at the advanced age of seventy-five, much lamented by those that lived on his hereditary estate. He was buried in Christ's Church, in Birsa.

By his wife he left two sons, in many respects different from their father, whose character was somewhat singular.

His body was large, and his mind comprehensive and vigorous. His hair was black, his eye-brows shaggy, and both his person and his genius suited the idea at that time entertained of a soldier. Few, or none, equalled him in either the boldness of his designs, or in the promptitude with which they were executed; he was active and provident; skilful in the art of war, and extremely fortunate; but, in the general tenor of his conduct, showed himself too much under the influence of avarice and ambition.

1064. Paul was the name of the elder of his sons, and Erlend that of the younger, who now succeeded their father in the earldom, and enjoyed his estate



estate and honours. They were men of a tall stature, fine proportion, and of great personal beauty, which they derived from their mother; and, in respect of prudence and moderation, they had few equals. That this was a prominent feature in their character, appeared evident from their behaviour to one another; for, instead of entering into contests respecting their share of their father's property, which had so often before convulsed the earldom, they mutually cultivated such good understanding, and lived in such laudable harmony, that they never even divided what had been left, but were contented to receive their proportions of its revenues. Paul, as being the elder brother, took the management of the whole, with the entire approbation of Erlend, who paid a just deference to superior age and experience; and both of them, from their love of peace, their mutual concord, and fraternal affection, promoted through the islands a degree of prosperity, to which they, for a long time past, had been in a great measure strangers.

If their pacific disposition, their moderation, and their taste for solitude and rural improvement, rendered their condition at home prosperous, their powerful connections abroad had an equal influence in securing them from foreign invasion. Their mother was descended from the royal family of Norway, which connected them with the reigning monarch of that country. By their father they were still more closely connected with the royal family of Scotland; and besides all this, the celebrated Malcolm Canmore, King of Scotland, had married their mother; so that, on both the one hand and the other, they were guarded by near relations, who were ready to support their power, and to whom they might apply with confidence, in any case of necessity.

During this state of prosperity and peace, Harold the Bold, King of Norway, actuated by the restless spirit of the times, had formed the resolution of invading England. In the prosecution of this design, he fitted out a formidable fleet, on board of which he embarked troops in proportion; and, having arrived in Orkney, where he left Elizabeth his Queen, and two daughters, and augmented his armament, by the addition of the two Earls and their forces, he sailed directly for the east coast of that kingdom. Cleveland was the place where he first landed. He soon afterwards took Scarborough by storm; and, marching to Holderness, he gained a signal



victory over the English forces : but, engaging them afterwards, when the King commanded in person, Harold was defeated and slain ; which determined his son Olave, and the two Earls, to embark as fast as they could, and return, with their fleet to Orkney, where they spent that winter.

The harmony that so happily subsisted between the two Earls was rather strengthened in this expedition ; and suffered no diminution, till their sons had grown up ; who, but too successfully, planted between them that discord which they had harboured in their own breasts. Hacon, the son of Paul, was of an aspiring turn of mind, active, and imperious ; and regarded his cousins, Magnus and Erlend, as his inferiors, because they were more gentle, pacific and contented, and less under the guidance of ambition. Between men of such different, nay almost opposite tempers, disputes of various kinds soon arose ; and, in order to preserve general tranquillity, it was highly expedient to bring them to a speedy conclusion. For this end, several individuals used their influence ; and when this was unavailing, some meetings of the leading men were held ; but as, in these, the fathers showed more inclination to enter into the views, and even adopt the prejudices of their sons, than to decide their quarrels on the principles of justice, they broke up, on finding their efforts to reconcile the parties ineffectual. In one of these, however, the friends of Hacon, by representing how much it would add to his renown, prevailed with him to go abroad, to learn the art of war, and the laws and manners of another country. Sweden was the kingdom he made choice of ; to which he went, after he had spent some time in Norway ; and, in both these countries, he supported a character for military skill and prowess, and was consequently entrusted with considerable command.

His cousin Magnus, in the mean time, was following, in the bosom of his own country, the most laudable pursuits ; for he was cultivating his own mind, and storing it with the most sublime and useful knowledge, and with the best sentiments of religion. Had he been suffered to go on in this practice, without interruption, his example might have attracted attention, and spread some taste for knowledge, as well as devotion ; but he was arrested by an unexpected visit from a distant and formidable enemy.

Hacon, while he was in Norway, had represented to Magnus Barefoot, who had now, in the room of his father Olave, ascended the throne, the



manifold advantages that might arise from a western expedition. He stated, in strong and flattering terms, the glory which he might thus acquire, the vast treasures that he might amass : and even insinuated, that he might thereby have an opportunity of avenging the death of his grandfather, by a successful invasion of England. Arguments like these, which appealed to his resentment, avarice, and ambition, could not fail to have great influence on the enterprising spirit of Magnus ; who soon complied with the advice given him, formed his plan, and lost no time in taking those measures that were necessary for carrying it into immediate execution. Through his whole kingdom, therefore, he levied men ; he prepared a fleet ; he ordered stores and provisions ; in all which, the nobles obeyed the King ; the people as readily obeyed the nobles ; and the youth of every rank and description flocking to his standard, all were ready, in a short time, to embark on board of sixty ships, which he publicly announced were intended for the western expedition. The King himself took the command of this powerful armament ; and, having taken with him his son Sigurd, a promising youth of only eight years of age, he set sail, and soon reached the coasts of Orkney. No sooner had he landed there, than he invested his son with the dignity of viceroy of the islands ; and, as he was under age, appointed for him guardians, counsellors, and administrators of his affairs ; seized the two Earls, and sent them prisoners into his kingdom ; and compelled their sons, Hacon, Magnus, and Erlend, to enter his service, that they might not have it in their power, in his absence, to disturb his son's government.

After he had thus arranged matters, he sailed for the western isles ; where he committed great devastation, harassing the people, and carrying off much plunder ; and, not satisfied with what he had done there, he, in the same irregular and desultory manner, carried his arms into Scotland, Ireland, and even England, where he performed some remarkable achievements.

In this expedition, Hacon, son of Paul, Earl of Orkney, by his intrepidity and strict obedience to orders, gained at the same time military fame and the King's favour ; while his cousin Erlend lost his life ; and Magnus, his other cousin, incurred the displeasure of the Sovereign, because, on a certain occasion, he had refused to fight ; for which he gave this reason,—that he



had never received any provocation from that enemy, nor had he any just cause of complaint against him.

To avoid the King's resentment on that account, he took the earliest opportunity to abandon his service ; and lived one while with the King of Scotland, and another with one of the bishops of England, where he was not only secure from danger, and enjoyed abundance and respect, but had also an excellent opportunity for indulging in his favourite pursuits of literature and religion.

The spring following, when Magnus King of Norway returned from his expedition into Orkney, and learned that the two Earls of Orkney had, the preceding winter, died in exile in his kingdom, he gave in marriage the daughter of Erlend to Kolus, the son of one of his favourite officers, who had died of the wounds which he had received in the battle of Anglesey. To atone for the hardship which he had imposed on the lady, in depriving her of her father's company ; to solace the young man for the loss of his father ; to render both comfortable, and enable them to live suitably to their dignity, he granted them lands in several places : he appointed for their place of abode the beautiful island of Papay-Welstray ; and, at their marriage, ranked Kolus in the number of the nobility.

Hacon, during almost the whole reign of King Magnus, attended him wherever he went ; he was foremost in every expedition ; he signalized himself by fighting in the hottest part of every battle ; and none was ever more punctual in giving obedience to his orders, in promoting his interest, or in seconding his views. After that monarch's death, and after his three sons had divided among them his kingdom, and reigned jointly, he repaired to that country, and obtained from them, as his just right, the one half of the Orkney islands.

Magnus, in the mean time, returned from Scotland, where he had now lived a long time, enjoying the respect, and sharing the confidence of the best families ; and, impelled by the entreaties of his countrymen, who were anxious to see him reap the fruits of his father's property, no less than by his own interest, he claimed the half of the islands as his patrimonial estate. To this claim, which was certainly just, his cousin Hacon made opposition ; and even collected an armed force, which, without doubt, he would have employed,



employed, had not the gentlemen of the country seasonably interposed their influence; to whom, after many arguments, and much delay, he promised that he would deliver up the subject in question to Magnus, provided he obtained the sanction of the King of Norway. Magnus, without scruple, accepted the condition, and sailed directly for that country, where he was not only graciously received and courteously entertained; but invested with the dignity of an Earl, and readily obtained what was the object of his voyage, the one half of the islands.

For some time after his return home, he lived with Hacon in terms of much cordiality. Mutual comfort and prosperity were the natural consequence of their pacific measures; and, during this season of concord, the islands abounded in all those productions that minister to the support of life.

But this enviable state of tranquillity was only of short continuance; for insidious flatterers abused their confidence with false and malicious reports with respect to one another's conduct and views, till they seemed to regard each other rather as enemies than relations; so that matters were on the eve of coming to an open rupture.

In this critical juncture, their friends again interposed; and, after much deliberation, and many entreaties, at last prevailed with them to suffer their passions to subside; to suspend their animosities; and, since they would not consent to an agreement, to submit their differences to arbitration. For this purpose, it was agreed, that both Earls, with a number of select friends, should hold a conference, in which their respective rights, and the just limits of their power and their authority, should be fixed, and a league of friendship established on a permanent basis; and, to give it the greater solemnity, it was to be held during Easter week, in the pleasant little island of Eaglesay. Magnus, accompanied with such of his friends as were most noted for wisdom and equity, sailed, according to agreement, with two ships only, and was early at the appointed place, consulting with his arbiters on the terms that were most likely to bring their disputes to a happy conclusion.

Hacon made choice of companions to carry to the meeting, of a description very different from those of his cousin; they were men accustomed to arms



arms and piracy, on whom neither justice nor mercy had a great degree of influence, and who were not much overawed by the authority of Heaven. To them he communicated his intentions ; and embarked on board of eight, instead of two, the stipulated number of ships. As soon as Magnus saw them approaching, he perceived plainly the treacherous design ; and, instead of taking any farther steps to procure an amicable treaty, began to fortify his mind to meet his impending fate. The friends that he had carried along with him, generously offered to stand by him in this extremity, and shed their blood in his defence ; but he as generously declined accepting their offer, and entreated them to lose no time in consulting for their own safety, and leave him to whatever that God, who had supported him hitherto, should, in his wisdom, think proper to appoint.

As soon as Hacon with his men had landed, Magnus with his followers went to the church ; where, in the duties of the most fervent devotion, he spent the most part of the night. Next day, Hacon, accompanied by his soldiers, went to the same place ; but found him not there, as he had retired with three friends to a private place, which he left as soon as he saw his enemy in search of him ; and boldly presented himself, with these words : ‘ Here I am ; and you need seek for me no farther.’ Hacon, with his men in arms, came up sword in hand, and found him prostrate on the ground, offering up his prayers ; which he had no sooner finished, than he rose up, and, with a countenance composed to a degree that manifested the utmost fortitude, accosted his cruel and implacable relation : ‘ Cousin,’ said he, ‘ you have justly offended the great God, by violating the oath which  
‘ you took ; to this crime you ought not to add another, nor sully your  
‘ honour, by shedding the blood of one who never injured you. My life  
‘ is in your hands ; and you are in the most imminent danger of contracting the blackest guilt, by taking it away. To prevent you, therefore,  
‘ from farther staining your soul, no less than to save myself from farther  
‘ danger, I shall submit to your choice any of these three conditions : Let  
‘ me have only two ships suitably furnished, with which I may sail to  
‘ Rome to procure absolution of our sins, and I shall bind myself, by a  
‘ most solemn oath, never more to return to Orkney ; or send me to Scotland to our friends, to be kept in such close confinement, that I can  
‘ never



‘ never henceforth make my escape ; or, if both these conditions be rejected, a third still remains—cut off my limbs, pluck out my eyes, and, in this maimed and mutilated state, shut me up in prison, to drag out the wretched remainder of my life.’

These terms, however severe and humiliating, were rejected with a mixture of stern cruelty and haughty disdain, which Magnus bore with an heroic composure that deserved a better fate ; and after he had earnestly prayed for the pardon of his own sins, and for forgiveness to all his enemies ; after he had exhorted the executioner, whose heart almost failed him, to take courage, and strike a bold stroke, telling him that princes ought not to die like malefactors, he, with his body bent forward, received the fatal blow.

IIIC.

His body, which, it is probable, would not have received the rites of interment from his enemy, was with much difficulty yielded up to his disconsolate mother, who had intreated it with tears, and who had it transported to Birsa, and buried in Christ’s Church, which had been built by Thorfin.

The superstitious credulity of that age believed, that the grave had no sooner received the venerable deposit than it began to perform miracles ; that there issued from it, in ordinary, a bright beam of light, and a fragrant smell, that separately or united, had such virtue, as to heal the diseases of those who flocked thither from all parts of the earldom.

If we recollect the different scenes in which he acted ; if we review the sentiments and conduct which he displayed ; if we form an opinion of his character, as it arises from these circumstances, and compare it with that which is drawn by the best informed authors ; we shall, on the whole, find reason to conclude, that he was far more respectable, and much better entitled to be ranked in the number of the Saints, than many that stand high on the list in the Roman kalendar.

As to his exterior, his stature was tall, his complexion fair, his voice clear and manly, and his fluency of speech was at once so ready and so pleasant, that no person would have hesitated in declaring him an accomplished orator. Neither were the endowments of his mind inferior to those of his body. If he engaged in war, which he seldom did but for the best reasons,



reasons, his understanding and prudence contributed much to secure him success. As a judge, he entered deeply into the nature of the cause, and decided on the principles of equity without respect of persons; he showed always much regard to honest men; and those that were addicted to theft, he seldom failed to punish with severity. His temper was mild, his manners affable and pleasant: he was charitable to the poor; kind to his dependants; generous to those of a higher station; and, what threw a bright lustre over his whole character, he was a devout worshipper of the Most High God.

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#### CHAP. IV.

OF THE TRANSACTIONS IN THE ISLANDS, TILL THEY BECAME SUBJECT TO  
THE CROWN OF SCOTLAND.

THIS daring procedure against one of such high rank, so much beloved, and his own near relation, spread such terror among the friends of Saint Magnus, that they held it expedient to submit to Hacon's sway, and were prevailed upon to swear fealty to him. He, accordingly, instantly took possession of the whole earldom, as if it had been either his own conquest, or had descended to him as an inheritance from his ancestors.

Though he had now obtained what, for many years, he had eagerly coveted, and ruled without controul; yet he was far from enjoying that happiness, which he fondly expected to derive from such an accession to his wealth and power.

Amidst all the pleasures with which his situation so amply furnished him, he could not, in his leisure moments, recollect, without compunction, his crimes; and particularly, the recent instance of his perjured cruelty against a virtuous person, so nearly connected by the ties of blood. In order to quiet his conscience, and atone for his crimes, he resolved, in conformity with the superstition of the age, to set out on a pilgrimage, first to Rome, and



and thence to Jerusalem; and soon afterwards accomplished his resolution. Having performed his vow, by visiting these celebrated places, and washed himself in the river Jordan, he returned home with his mind more easy, and began a new course of life. Instead of following depredation and piracy, in which he had delighted formerly, the prosperity of his country now arrested his attention. He cultivated and promoted the arts of peace; he rectified some abuses in the government; and enacted many wise laws, by which the privileges of the people were both extended and secured. By means of these patriotic deeds, and others of a similar nature, his former actions were almost entirely forgotten; and he became so firmly fixed in the affections of his people, that, when he died, he was held in the most grateful remembrance.

Between his character and that of his grandfather there was a striking similarity. Both of them had, in the fervour of youth, and even in the calmer vigour of manhood, followed the bent of their own inclination, and committed many unjust and cruel deeds: both of them, at last, reflected on their former ways with horror, and had recourse to repentance and reformation. The first part of their conduct was, in a great measure, sanctioned by the remaining genius of the old system, while the latter may be considered as the genuine fruits of the Christian religion.

After Christianity was introduced, it seems to have been for some time cultivated by those men who were left by the King of Norway; in conjunction, it is probable, with such Irish priests as had arrived before them, or come over afterwards, without any regular established head. But it cannot be determined, whether they were all equal in rank, and depended on the people for subsistence; or whether there was any regular subordination among them, and a fund appropriated to their support. Thus much, however, is certain, that the bishops of Orkney are first mentioned by the English writers. Hence, the strong probability of what has been asserted, that the archbishops of York, who for some time claimed the honour of nominating prelates to the Scottish sees, extended their views still farther north, and nominated bishops of Orkney. These, however, seem to have been nothing but titulars, without power, jurisdiction, and revenue, and



created for the sole purpose of giving to the see of York a greater show of power, and a more extended authority. To this description we are inclined to think belong Thorolfus, Adalbertus, and Rodolfus Novellus, whom we find denominated bishops of Orkney, as we have no evidence of their either having been in the islands, or of their having exercised the office, or received the emoluments of the episcopal dignity. Rodolfus, bishop of Orkney, however, is mentioned as a witness to a charter of King David the First of Scotland \*.

But though these, and several others, may have been dignified with the title, for the sake of ostentation, William seems to have been, if not the very first bishop, at least the first who had a fixed residence in the country †. To that office he was appointed some time previously to the murder of Earl Magnus; and he seems to have held it for a long period; but it is not known whether it was conferred on him by the suffrage of the people or the clergy; or whether he was invested with it by the sovereign power. Neither is there any account given, whether he was a native or a stranger; but he resided in the island of Eglishay, where he was very frequently consulted in matters of the utmost importance; and, from the opinions or the advices which he gave, and indeed from the general tenor of his conduct, he appears to have been, for that age, a man of uncommonly good sense and moderation ‡.

Hacon had been twice married, and left by each of his wives a son, the one of whom was named Paul the Silent, and the other Harold the Orator. Harold's mother, Helga, was a daughter of Maddan, a man of great wealth and influence in Caithness, whose son was Count Ottar of Thurso.

From their earliest days, the two brothers had shown dispositions extremely dissimilar; and as soon as the property and government of the earldom came into their hands, that difference was still more conspicuous. In scarcely any point could they agree with one another. Their plans and their interests frequently interfered; the animosities of their friends tended to widen the breach which their natural dispositions had formed; and their

\* Keith's Catalogue of Scottish Bishops.

† Torfæus.

‡ Torfæi Rerum Orcadensium Hist.



contentions, which had no appearance of being smothered, were often on the very brink of breaking out into open hostility. As the right of primogeniture was not then, at least, generally received, the title of the one was equally valid with that of the other to the earldom; but with such tempers, and such jarring interests, it was impossible that they could either enjoy or rule it together; and therefore, convinced of this, they divided it between themselves, each having one half of the islands.

Harold had, besides, obtained from the King of Scotland a grant of Caithness; which, though a very considerable accession to his fortune, neither rendered him contented, nor gave him such a decided superiority, as secured peace between the Earls; for though their property was now divided, and distinctly defined, their disputes were so far from being done away, that they became daily more violent. The wisest of their friends perceived the probable consequence. To avert the impending calamities, they frequently consulted together; they tried to find out expedients, and, in short, exerted themselves to the utmost, to bring about a reconciliation. For this end, they held conferences with the Earls themselves; in which they represented, in strong terms, the pernicious consequences that must result from their contests: they dissuaded them from violent measures; and proposed terms that to both of them would be equally advantageous and honourable. The confidential friend and special favourite of Earl Paul had been slain by some of Earl Harold's attendants; on account of which, the former would listen to no terms of agreement, till the latter banished the perpetrators of that deed. Importuned by the gentlemen of the country, Harold consented to their proposal; upon which both Earls agreed to forget all their animosities and contentions; and henceforth to cultivate a sincere amity one with another; and with a view no less to prove, than to confirm their mutual reconciliation, they engaged to entertain each other splendidly at the approaching Christmas.

Harold, as soon as the festival arrived, and it was his turn to entertain his brother, provided whatever was most rare, delicious, or magnificent, for a sumptuous entertainment at his palace in Orphir. While the banquet lasted, Earl Harold having by accident entered one of his rooms, found Helga his mother, and his aunt Franquhark, employed in embroidering a



shirt of fine linen ; and on his inquiring for whom such an expensive and beautiful piece of dress was intended, they told him it was for Earl Paul his brother. Enraged at the supposed partiality, he tore it out of their hands ; and, notwithstanding their entreaties, and even their insinuations of its fatal quality, he resolved to put it on, whatever might be the consequence. This he accordingly did ; and, as the shirt was poisoned, it no sooner came in contact with his body, than he was seized with a strange trembling, succeeded by pain, insomuch that he was carried to bed, where, in a short time, he expired in the most extreme agony.

Paul, who now, with the entire consent and cordial approbation of the inhabitants, had entered into full possession of the islands, began to turn his thoughts to the plot that had been formed against him ; and, being convinced that those execrable wretches had intended that diabolical present for his destruction, took measures for expelling both them and their attendants from Orkney.

Helga, Margaret her daughter, Franquhark, and Erlend the son of Harold, when they were driven from Orphir, went over to Caithness, and thence travelled farther into the country, till they reached the lands of Franquhark, that are supposed to have lain in Sutherland. There they continued for some time hatching new plots, which they were not long in having ready for execution.

In the mean time, a competitor arose from a different quarter, who put in his claim for a share of the earldom, and interrupted the repose of Earl Paul and his subjects.

Kolus, who had now married the daughter of Erlend, and sister of St. Magnus, chose rather to live on an estate which he had inherited from his father, in his native land, than reside on that given him by his sovereign in this country. He had a son named Kolius, after his grandfather, who was greatly distinguished, among the young men of his time, no less for the uncommon beauty of his person, than for his various accomplishments. His stature did not exceed the ordinary size ; his limbs were finely proportioned ; his hair was of the colour of the amethyst ; and such an excellent education had he received, that from a poem, said to be yet extant, it appears that he was acquainted with nine of those arts which were then held

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in the highest estimation. He could play skilfully at chess, and make use of the Runic characters; read books, compose poems, dexterously handle the oar; was well skilled in music; could skate with wooden shoes on the snow; and, besides all these accomplishments, that were highly valued, he could also work curiously in wood and iron. By virtue of these endowments, combined with an elegant form and an amiable disposition, he soon insinuated himself so much into the favour of his sovereign, that he created him an earl; granted him, at the same time, as heir of St. Magnus, one half of the islands, and gave him the name of Ronald, after Ronald the son of Brusius, whom the queen dowager had declared to be the handsomest and finest gentleman of all the earls of Orkney. But so long as the whole property was in the hands of another, the title was only an incumbrance; and the grant, however well intended, could be considered in no other light than an empty name. To render both a substantial benefit, commissioners were dispatched to make requisition of half the earldom, and, in case of compliance, to hold out such proffers of friendship as it became one relation to shew to another. They were received by Earl Paul with haughtiness and contempt; and to their demands he proudly replied, that he would give up no part of his estate to a remote relation, to the exclusion of the son of his sister or brother, whose right was unquestionably much better; and that, if it was attempted to be wrested out of his hands, he would defend it by force of arms, as long as he was able himself, or could be supported by his friends, and the providence of God.

As soon as they received this answer, the commissioners, agreeably to their instructions, directed their course across the Pentland Frith, and expeditiously repaired to Franquhark, and her friends, with offers of friendship, and one half of the islands, on condition that they would enter into alliance with Earl Ronald, and assist him with all their force in the war against Earl Paul, in which he was likely soon to be engaged.

Franquhark, and her sister Helga, had by this time formed very important connexions in Scotland, by the marriage of Margaret, Hacon's daughter, to Maddan Earl of Athole, who was a man distinguished for his wealth and his power, and was at the head of the nobility, on account



count of his connexion with the Royal family. But all this good fortune had not been able to erase from their minds the memory of past transactions, in which they had contracted much guilt: their pride had been wounded, their ambition blasted, their avarice defeated, and they burned with resentment against Paul, whom they considered as the cause of all their disappointments.

Besides all this, they had also an earnest desire to see young Harold in the enjoyment of his grandfather's dignity and estate. For these, and some other reasons, the two sisters joyfully received the intelligence of Ronald's designs: they received his ambassadors with joy; they applauded his application to them, and the measures which he meant to pursue; and promised to be ready to support him by the middle of next summer, when they expected Ronald would be over, and have his forces in readiness to join them.

The commissioners had no sooner returned to Norway with this pleasing answer, than Ronald, confiding in such powerful allies, began to entertain the most sanguine hopes of success, and found little difficulty to inspire those whom he meant to employ in the enterprise with the same expectations. During that winter, aided by his father Kolus, he made every preparation for the intended expedition. Some men of eminence encouraged his aspiring views; many adventurers of note joined the armament; so that in a short time the Earl found himself at the head of a fleet of six sail, well stored and sufficiently manned. The weather soon afterwards proved favourable, and he sailed for Shetland, where he arrived safe, but was detained some time by contrary winds. If he had been active and zealous in one quarter, Franquhark had been no less so in another; and she had now eleven sail of ships completely equipped, and ready at the time agreed upon, to join those of her ally, in order to promote their respective views.

In the mean time, Earl Paul received the first notice of the danger that threatened him, when he was in the island of Roufay, at an entertainment prepared for him by Sigurd of Westness, his prime counsellor and confidential friend. To this place he sent for Kugius and Thorkel Flettar, men of eminence in Westray, on purpose to consult them and  
Sigurd



Sigurd what measures were most proper to be adopted ; and as they gave very different opinions, he followed the plan suggested by his own courage and honour, which was, instantly to procure what force he could, and go out boldly and attack the enemy. All his friends concurred, and cheerfully contributed their assistance in fitting out a small squadron of five ships, with which he intended to sail directly for Shetland ; but on weighing anchor, notice was brought him that a fleet was seen off Pentland Frith, steering to the north, which made him alter his resolution. This was Franquhark's, as he conjectured, consisting of eleven sail, commanded by her grandson Aulver Rosta, son of Thaliot of Barkwick, which he wisely determined to engage, before they could join Ronald ; and, for this purpose, steering to the east of Deerness, he engaged them with such effect, that he took five of them, and put the rest to flight. After he had pursued them along the east coast of the mainland, and past South Ronaldsay, as far as the Pentland Frith, he returned and manned the ships which he had taken from the enemy : these, together with his own, and two galleys that he had received as a reinforcement, now formed a squadron of twelve sail. Trusting to these, elated with success, and availing himself of the high spirits his men were in from their recent victory, he sailed for Shetland, where he had reason still to expect the enemy ; and before any intelligence of either his intention or his approach was received in that place, came on them suddenly, and took by surprise the whole of Ronald's fleet, which he carried in triumph to his own country. Being now in great force, he reposed himself for a little, received the congratulations of his friends on his wonderful and unexpected success, entertained them splendidly, and received assurances of their future fidelity, and of their assistance, to put the earldom in such a posture of defence, as would enable it to repel that invasion which he had reason to dread would shortly take place. To render the measures adopted for that purpose the more effectual, it was unanimously agreed, that light-houses should be erected in the several islands, in order to warn the people of approaching danger, from every quarter ; but especially from the coast of Shetland. The first of these was erected on the Fair-Isle, as being nearest to that country ; the second on North Ronaldsay ; the third on Sanday ; the fourth on



Westray; the fifth on Rousay; and the rest were to be disposed among the other islands, in such a manner, that the inhabitants could not fail to be apprised of an enemy's approach sufficiently soon.

In the mean time, Earl Ronald, as soon as he could find ships in which to embark the scanty remains of his army, returned home with shame and sorrow, and was the first that bore the unpleasant tidings of his unfortunate disaster to his own country. His father Kolus, who was a man of great sense, revived his drooping spirits, by assuring him, that his friends were ready to aid him in fitting out such an armament as would be sufficient to renew the enterprise; which, if he were of the same sentiments with him, they should render famous, either by their own fall, or by their obtaining the object at which they aimed. The King himself, with whom he was a special favourite, was the first to present him with a royal galley. His friends, following such an illustrious example, furnished men and ships; and by his own exertions, united with those of his father, he was in a short time commander of a fleet of six ships, full of intrepid warriors, and other six loaded with provisions and military stores. After all were ready, and previously to embarkation, Kolus, who was the soul of the operations, in a full assembly of their friends, in order to give more dignity to the enterprise, and to ensure their confidence, had recourse to an expedient that showed clearly he was no stranger to the human heart.

He stated, that the lands in question had been the property of his uncle St. Magnus, who had a much better right to them, and was more powerful than those by whom they were now held. To him therefore he ought now to apply for assistance; from him he ought to request the possession of them, as an inheritance, to which he had an undoubted right. He therefore exhorted his son to make a solemn vow to St. Magnus, that if he would grant him those lands (at which he pointed) as his patrimony, he would build in Kirkwall a church, in magnificence far excelling any that had ever been built in these islands; which should be dedicated to him; and which should have revenues appropriated amply sufficient for its support; that the bones or ashes of the saints should be transported thither, and that it should henceforth be the seat of the bishops of Orkney.

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The propofal was applauded by the whole affembly as replete with wifdom: Ronald, with filial reverence and affection, complied with his father's advice; the vow was made; St. Magnus was invoked to espoufe their caufe; and the moft entire confidence was repofed in him, that he would crown their labours with final fuccels.

Though the Earl formerly had met with difafters, no fooner had he performed this pious deed, than, according to the accounts of the age, heaven and earth began to fmile on the projected enterprife; the fky became mild and ferene; the weather fair; the fea fmooth; and a gentle breeze fprung up from the eaft, to waft his fleet in fafety to the wifhed for fhores. Shetland was the place where he firft landed; and there, inftead of that refiftance which he expected, he met with congratulations from the people, who flocked to him in numbers, to engage in his fervice, and furnifh him with what information he ftood in need of, with regard to the fituation of affairs in Orkney. The fcene was now totally changed; for, inftead of that gloom with which he had been furrounded, all things wore a cheerful afpect; and fortune feemed determined to perfecute his relation Paul with as much feverity as fhe had done him on a recent occafion. But whatever confidence he might have in the fupport of St. Magnus, or in the courage and fidelity of his troops; however much he might be elated with hope, from the favourable turn of his affairs, he did not confider it prudent to neglect thofe ftratagems that might annoy and weaken the enemy.

He therefore ordered fome of his fmallervelfels to be rowed toward the Orkney ifles, and the men to lye on their oars, and raife their fails a little, to give them the appearance of a fleet at a diftance. During the day, they were raifed higher and higher; and, by the time they were hoifted to the maft-head, they exhibited the refemblance of a fleet near at hand, and very formidable.

This ftratagem, which was intended to raife difturbance among the people, by fpreading a falfe alarm, foon had the defired effect. In confequence of what was confidered as an approaching danger, the fires were kindled on the light-houfes to give the appointed alarm; the leading men affembled, and were foon joined by the inferior ranks from every quarter; but when, to their furprife, no fleet could be feen, they were at firft in fuf-



pence, and soon afterwards they became so enraged at their superiors, and particularly at the Earl, who, they imagined, had called them from their business without any reason, that they could scarcely be prevailed on to return home, without raising some dangerous commotion.

Another expedient was adopted, that had some influence in embarrassing the one Earl, and seconding the views of the other. A man of some sagacity and resolution was prevailed on to remove with his family to the Fairisle, and to pretend that he had been stripped of all he had by Ronald's soldiers, and that he was compelled to take refuge there to preserve his life. So well did he act his part, and he and his sons so ingratiated themselves with the inhabitants, by their readiness at all times to serve them, that no suspicion whatever was entertained, that they had come over with any sinister design. Attentive, however, to the business with which they were entrusted, they employed every dark night in drenching with water the wood intended for the light-house; so that, when Ronald's fleet actually appeared, no art could kindle it, or make it burn, so as to serve the purpose of a signal of alarm to the islands.

By these and other means, the Earl secured the confidence of his friends, and diminished the power of the enemy; and, availing himself of their ignorance of his approach, and their consequent security, he landed safely in the island of Westray, without the smallest opposition. The same happy success attended him in other places. Many of the most considerable inhabitants hastened to rank themselves under his banner; their friends and followers were as forward in joining them; so that he soon saw himself at the head of such a respectable force, as to be able to contend with his foe on equal terms.

No sooner had Paul received information of his arrival, and the alarming progress he had made in gaining over the people to espouse his cause, than he began to consult those in whom he had the greatest confidence, what course he ought to steer, to avoid the impending storm. Distracted with different counsels, and uncertain, perhaps, of the fidelity of even those who yet adhered to his interest, he requested the interference of Bishop William, and prevailed so far, that, by his judicious mediation, a truce for two weeks was obtained, in order that matters might be better



arranged for bringing the points in dispute to some termination. That interval, which the Earl meant to have spent with his friend Sigurd of Westness, partly with a view to receive his advice, and that of his other friends, and partly for the purpose of festivity, proved fatal not only to his cause, but even to his liberty. The Earl had a particular favourite, whose name was Olave of Gairsay, a man of high rank, married to a lady named Allief, descended of an honourable family, and distinguished for an heroic disposition, who, though they belonged to this place, lived at Dungsby in Caithness. Among other children, they had a son, whose name was Swein, to which he added that of Allief, from his mother. This Swein, the son of Allief, who discovered himself afterwards to be a man of a daring spirit, much sagacity, and of a restless disposition, lived in Caithness with his father, till their house was burnt by Aulvar Rosta, at the instigation of Franquhark, when he found it a matter of expediency to fly that country, and take refuge under the protection of the Earl of Orkney, who then resided in Orphir.

There, Paul had a magnificent palace erected on an eminence, behind which there was a gentle declivity, and above it a hill; and, on the other side of the mainland, the bay of Forth, in which is the island of Damsey, with a castle on it, of which the governor at that time was Blain, the son of Thorstein of Fidderness. In this palace was a large hall, calculated to contain a great many guests. In the south wall, and near the east corner, which joined the sides of the court, was a door, and, before it, an elegant chapel, to which there was access by that door from the hall or dining-room. To a person entering the court, there was, on the left hand, a large vaulted cellar, in which were laid up many large casks full of ale, and, in the palace, another door opposite to him, that led to a drawing-room. To this spacious and hospital abode, the Earl had invited his friends to spend the Christmas. This they seemed to have done, with a due mixture of innocent mirth and unaffected piety, till a quarrel, founded on an old family feud, unhappily arose, in which Swein, the son of Allief, slew Swein Bustrop, one of the Earl's bravest servants. As this deed seemed to have been done, in a great measure, in self-defence, it might, of consequence, have been easily pardoned, and, in all probability, would have been so, had



he delivered himself instantly to justice or mercy ; but his neglecting to do this, so much offended the Earl, that Swein thought it prudent to make all the haste he could to avoid his vengeance. In order to this, he took refuge the first night in the castle of Damsfey ; thence he went to Eglefay, to state his circumstances to Bishop William, who, on hearing his case, advised him to lose no time in removing to a friend of his in the western islands. Thither he went without delay, and remained some time pondering on his treatment ; and, on that account, fostering in his breast the keenest resentment, and breathing nothing but vengeance. In this temper of mind, he went over to the Earl of Athole, and his wife Margaret the daughter of Earl of Hacon ; and with them spent some time in hatching many wicked plots, among which this was one, to seize Earl Paul, and carry him a prisoner into Scotland.

To that Earl and his wife, who so earnestly desired to have their infant son Harold raised to the earldom of Orkney, no scheme could have been devised that was more acceptable ; and therefore nothing was wanting, on their part, to confirm him in his design, and enable him to execute such a desperate enterprize. Incited to action by their flattery and promises, no less than by his own desire of revenge, and his natural propensity to attempt whatever was bold and perilous, he equipped a galley, on board of which he put thirty men selected for the purpose ; and, steering directly north, sailed by the west coast of the mainland, through Evie Sound, for the island of Rousay. As he approached the shore, he concealed many of his men, to prevent their raising an alarm by their appearance ; and, under the pretence of being merchants, come for the purpose of traffic, he accosted the first inhabitants he saw, from whom he learned, that the Earl was still there, and at that time amusing himself with catching otters, in the caves formed by the sea in a promontory on the west end of the island.

The object he had most at heart, seemed now to be gained ; and an opportunity so favourable was not to be neglected. He landed his men, and hastened to the place, where he cut to pieces the most of his guards, with the loss only of six of his own men ; seized the Earl, in spite of all his resistance, and dragged him on board his galley ; with which he immediately



failed the same course he came, till he reached Murray, whence he travelled with his prisoner by land to Athole.

To this day, along the shore between Skebrohead and the house of Westness, there is a plain on which are vast ruins, and graves that have been found to contain swords, helmets, beads, combs, and some other articles; and the name of Swendro, which that place still bears, points it out, with much probability, as the scene of that nefarious capture.

The unfortunate Earl was no sooner introduced into his sister's house, than he was kept in close confinement, in constant dread of immediate death; so that the only means he could devise for his safety, was to convey to young Harold his nephew, all his right and title to the earldom of Orkney, which he accordingly did.

Meantime, various were the conjectures with respect to what had befallen him, and his friends suffered a painful state of suspense. Amidst the general uncertainty, many innocent persons were suspected, especially such as had shown an inclination to lean to Ronald's side. Doubts and fears were entertained by many; for, as he had been seized suddenly, and carried off with equal secrecy and expedition, no certain information of what had been his fate, could possibly be obtained.

Swein's arrival from the south soon afterwards put an end to all this anxious uncertainty, and substituted sorrow and lamentation in the room of these doubts and fears; for that bold warrior declared openly, by the mouth of the Bishop, into whose protection he had again put himself, that Earl Paul was now in the close custody of the Earl of Athole, and in a condition that totally disqualified him from ever returning to his native land. His countrymen, among whom he was much beloved, having heard the particulars, mourned his unhappy fate, and were inconsolable that they had it not in their power to effect his delivery.

From his life it appears, that though he was well qualified to conduct the business of war, he discovered no aversion to pacific measures. His manners were more gentle than were common in that age; he was generous to all, particularly to his friends; both in public and private he spoke little; and he employed others to speak for him, in those assemblies of his people which he sometimes found it convenient to hold.

Ronald,



Ronald, now that his rival was removed, was raised, by the universal consent of the inhabitants, to be sole Earl of Orkney. As soon as he found himself firmly and tranquilly fixed, he began to think of performing his vow, which, on a former occasion, he had so solemnly made. His father Kolus, who had advised the measure, was present, and was ready to lend his aid in its execution. He ordered the materials, and whatever else was necessary for the building; he marked out the form and dimensions, and appointed the workmen their respective tasks; and, when the foundation of that magnificent structure had been laid, and the work advanced rapidly for the first year, but languished in the two succeeding for want of money, that wise man advised his son to repeal that law by which the Earls succeeded to the feus, on condition that the proprietors would purchase that privilege, at the rate of a mark for every *ploughgang*, to be applied in finishing so religious a work.

His son, the Earl, saw the propriety of the proposal, and cheerfully complied with his advice; and no sooner had he called an assembly of the gentlemen to make the overture, than all heartily agreed; and the money raised from that sale, was found sufficient to finish the noble edifice of the Cathedral of St. Magnus, which is, to this moment, an interesting object to every man of taste, and the ornament not of the town only in which it is situated, but of the whole islands.

The strict performance of this vow, which was justly regarded as a pious deed, together with his mild and equitable administration, procured him the affections of the people.

When he had been about two years in possession of the whole earldom, an embassy arrived from the Earl of Athole, at the head of which was Bishop John, demanding one half of Orkney for his son Harold, in whose favour his uncle Paul had resigned his entire claim, and engaging, that if that demand were complied with, Harold should be under the direction of Earl Ronald, not only in his earlier, but in his riper years; and, in any difference that might arise between them, Ronald's will should be the law.

To this demand, which appeared reasonable, Ronald was not of a temper to make any objection; and, therefore, during the ensuing Lent, he went over to Caithness; and, on the very terms proposed, entered into, and concluded



cluded a treaty of friendship, as the foundation of future tranquillity. In order to render it more firm and permanent, it was considered as proper to communicate that league to their respective countrymen; and this being done, it was ratified by a most solemn oath of the nobles, of both Orkney and Scotland.

Harold, now a partner in the Earldom, came over with his new friend Earl Ronald, and, in company with them, a man of the name of Thorbiorn Clark, to whose care was entrusted the young Earl's education. This man was brave, strong, and of great agility; well calculated for conducting matters of importance, at the same time that he was proud and arrogant, and made no scruple to violate the laws of integrity. He had married a sister of Swein, the son of Aslief, with whom he lived on terms of pretty strict friendship, founded on a similitude of character; and resided sometimes in Scotland, and sometimes in Orkney. Under his tuition, however, young Harold seems to have made great improvement; and he and his illustrious relation lived together with the cordiality of brothers; so that all the branches of the widely extended Earldom flourished greatly under their joint dominion.

Such a favourable opinion did Earl Ronald entertain of Harold's understanding, and such was the confidence he reposed in his justice and wisdom, that, when he formed the resolution of travelling into distant countries, he committed the whole management of affairs to him, though he did not exceed twenty years of age; and the manner in which he conducted himself in that trust, showed that it could scarcely have been placed in better hands.

The very year in which Ronald departed for Constantinople and the Holy Land, the King of Norway, trusting to the absence of the one Earl, and the youth and inexperience of the other, resolved to establish or renew his sovereignty in the islands. For this end he arrived in South Ronaldsay, with a number of troops on board a formidable fleet: and, as soon as he learned that Harold, in the absence of his relation, had gone over to Caithness, he made all the dispatch in his power to cross the Frith; first captured his ship in the road; and then seized him in the town of Thurso, while he was under no apprehension of danger. Having thus got him into his power,

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it was easy to prescribe terms ; he therefore compelled him to pay seven marks of gold ; and publicly to acknowledge, that he held at present, and would in future hold, the earldom from the crown of Norway.

Hard as this must have been to a young man in his circumstances, his prudence and resolution were soon put to a much more severe test.

Scarcely two years had elapsed from the departure of Ronald, when a claim was made on his estate by Erlend, the son of Harold the Orator, who, after the death of Count Ottar, had for the most part lived at Thurso ; sometimes in the Western Isles ; and was, according to the custom of that age, frequently employed in predatory expeditions. Great hopes were entertained respecting this young nobleman.

He was affable to such as were of an inferior rank ; generous to his relations and his friends ; extremely willing to listen to good counsel ; and these, with many other excellent and amiable qualities, secured him the esteem of his soldiers, and the attachment of his dependants, of which the number was very considerable.

The grant of half of Caithness, with the title and dignity of an Earl, had been conferred on him by Malcolm, King of Scotland, as they had been on his father before ; and when he came to take possession, he availed himself of circumstances to demand one half of the islands.

Harold, attentive to the charge with which he was entrusted, and confident of his own superior strength, refused all compliance, as equally unsuitable to his interest, his character and his dignity ; and when the gentlemen of the country interested themselves in favour of the claimant, and urged the propriety of complying with his demand, he resisted their importunity, and persisted firmly in his opposition. A peace, however, was at length agreed on, to continue for the space of one year ; and, in the mean time, the half of the earldom was to be yielded up to Erlend, provided he obtained the consent of the prince who then ruled in Norway.

Without loss of time, he embraced the first occasion to sail for that country, and had cause to congratulate himself on his success, in as far as he readily obtained from that monarch every right that he could give to the estate that Earl Harold then possessed. He now returned home, pleased and elated with his success in this respect, in haste to demand the fulfilment



ment of the agreement; and when the Earl refused to fulfil the deed, he, by the assistance of the bold and sagacious Swein, the son of Aslief, assaulted his castle with fire and sword, which, though defended with bravery, he would have soon reduced to ashes; had not Harold consented, in presence of many gentlemen of the country, to deliver up the half of the islands to him; and, at the same time, sworn solemnly that he would never afterwards demand restitution. Having thus far accomplished the object he aimed at, he convened an assembly, at which all the inhabitants attended, and laid before them the rights he had received, which, upon accurate examination, being found valid, they all cheerfully agreed to transfer their obedience to him.

Earl Ronald, returning soon afterwards from his eastern travels, was informed of all that had passed; and, in a meeting held on purpose to settle the new arrangement, it was, after much deliberation and many arguments, at last agreed, that the islands should be equally divided between Ronald and Erlend, who stipulated to combine their force to oppose Harold, or any one else that should venture to invade them. This agreement, which, on the part of Ronald, had been entered into more from necessity than choice, and in direct violation of former engagements, was not of long duration.

Harold, after being constrained to part with his estate, and deliver it, with all its rents and emoluments, irrevocably into the hands of his enemy, hastened indignantly into the south to his friends; and as soon as, by their aid and his own influence, he had raised an army adequate to the end in view, he returned to the north with as much precipitation. By the time he reached Caithness, Ronald, who had been in the adjacent country, met him; and soon afterwards, in a meeting held in the Castle of Thurso, both of them, without scruple or hesitation, disregarded the treaties which they had solemnly entered into with Erlend, and entered into a new one between themselves. Neither of them wanted strong motives to adopt this dishonourable measure. The interest of at least one party was deeply concerned; they were intimately connected by the ties of blood, of early, long, and intimate friendship, and the ties of guardian and ward, which were perhaps as strong as any of them; and these consi-



derations appearing superior to all others, prevailed with them to exclude totally their other relation, and make between themselves a new partition of the earldom. This partition-treaty was no sooner finished, than the two Earls, happy in the company and friendship of each other, sailed for their respective seats with a fleet of fourteen ships; and having touched first at Widewall, and then at Scapa, it was considered as most convenient to station the whole of them in the harbour of Kerston, near Stromness.

In the mean time, Erlend and his friend Swein being at South Ronaldsay, when the first notice was brought them, of the recent agreement into which the two Earls had entered at Thurso; and, having neither military nor naval force sufficient to oppose theirs, wisely resolved to avoid open and avowed war, and to try the effect of stratagem. With this view they went over to Caithness, as indeed their safety at that time dictated, and there caused a rumour to be spread, that they, regardless of what had happened, were busy in making preparations for, and had their minds fully bent on a western expedition.

To throw the Earls more effectually off their guard, and thereby execute their plan with less hazard and more certainty, they embarked their troops; and, weighing anchor, rowed with all possible vigour along the north coast, till they could no longer be descried from Orkney, when, putting about, they sailed back speedily with a favourable gale, and, by a sudden surprise, took the whole fleet, while the Earls themselves had a very narrow escape; and soon afterwards, to avoid farther danger, fled with a few attendants only into Caithness.

Erlend, now in possession of the whole naval strength, and indeed the entire direction of the whole islands, had the precaution to consult his principal officers with respect to the harbour in which his fleet should be stationed, in order to be most free from danger, readiest for attack, and, at the same time, most convenient for observation. Swein, with his usual penetration and sagacity, declared in favour of some of the fine harbours in Waes, while others strenuously contended for the Bay of Frith, by the island of Damsay; which, though certainly inferior in most respects, was preferred, perhaps, on account of its vicinity to Kirkwall. As the ships, therefore, lay very near the island, the Earl spent his time on board his  
ship



ship and in the Castle of Damsay, indulging himself with his friends in social intercourse, with too little apprehension of surprise or dread of danger; and, in this state of injudicious security, and in the absence of Swein, who had gone to Sandwick, to settle some domestic matters, he was suddenly attacked by the two Earls; and, before his men could come to his relief, slain in a state of shameful intoxication. His body, as soon as it 1154. could be found, was taken up, and carried to Kirkwall, where, with due regard to his dignity, it was deposited in the cathedral.

From this time, the two Earls lived in the utmost harmony, as indeed they had done, with only one interruption, ever since Earl Paul's captivity; and neither any serious attack from without, nor commotion from within, for a length of time, happened to disturb their tranquillity. Happy in each other's friendship, and the esteem of their countrymen, they performed with pleasure their respective duties, and amused themselves occasionally with hunting and fishing; and, while Harold confined his attention mostly to private matters, public affairs were under the management of Ronald, in virtue of the original contract.

This union, which had been so firm, cordial, and lasting, was, however, soon dissolved by the hands of an assassin.

Thorbiorn Clark, the preceptor of Earl Harold, was a man of strong and unruly passions; and had conceived the most violent resentment against Ronald, for an act of banishment which he had passed against him, on account of some criminal action. In his exile, he lived sometimes in the south, with the King of Scotland, and sometimes lurked privately in Caithness, with all parts of which he was well acquainted.

According to custom, the two Earls had crossed the Frith, with a view to spend the summer in hunting wild goats and roes in the mountains of Caithness and Sutherland. This was too favourable an opportunity for Thorbiorn to neglect. With three companions, of a character in most respects similar to his own, he haunted the secret places of the country through which the Earl was likely to pass; and, as soon as he observed him separated a little from the rest of his party, he, with his desperadoes, rushed out from a den in which they had been lurking, and stabbed Ronald with the most barbarous cruelty.



Thus fell that generous, affable, humane, and, for the age he lived in, accomplished nobleman, to the unspeakable loss of his friends, and the unfeigned grief of his countrymen. His body was conveyed to Thurso, whence it was carried in state, by his friend Earl Harold and the Orkney gentlemen, to their own country, and laid in the church of the Holy Virgin; and, upon the Pope's order being given to rank him in the number of the saints, it was removed thence, and deposited in the Cathedral of St. Magnus. He left only one daughter, whose name was Ingigerde, married to Eric Stagbreller, to whom she bore three sons and as many daughters. Though all these survived their grandfather, and had an undoubted right to his real, no less than his personal estate, Harold, without any scruple, entered into the possession of the whole earldom. The youth, perhaps, of these grandchildren, their want of friends and power to combat the influence of their experienced and ambitious rival, might have been the cause of his obtaining so easily, and enjoying for a considerable length of time, what belonged to them, without opposition. A great deal, however, of both the power and success of this Earl depended on the exertions of Swein, the son of Aslief, in not only supporting his interest, and forwarding his views, but in spreading far and wide his military fame.

In an age when martial achievements were the most honourable employment, and piracy was practised by men of even high rank without disgrace, this man was an eminent character; and his mode of life exhibits a rude picture of ancient manners. His extraction has already been pointed out. He was driven from Caithness by the machinations of an enemy; and, taking refuge in Earl Paul's court, he was forced to fly the earldom for the murder of one of that Earl's servants; he concerted plans for his ruin; and, finally, in their execution, he seized that very Earl in the midst of his friends, and carried him captive into a foreign country. Besides all this, in union with Erlend, he artfully contrived, and as promptly executed, a stratagem, which cost the Earls at once the loss of their whole fleet; not to mention many other signal actions for which he was equally renowned.

His estate seems to have been very extensive; and his principal residence was in the island of Gairsay; chosen, perhaps, on account of its vicinity to the

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the mainland, and its central and pleasant situation. His castle, on the banks of the sea, was conveniently situated, and commanded a pleasant and extensive prospect; it contained a very large hall, for accommodating a number of guests, friends, and retainers. Here he kept eighty men, qualified for very different kinds of labour, bound by interest and affection to promote his advantage, to receive his orders, and to avenge his cause. In spring, he employed them in cultivating the ground and sowing the seed; in which he was not only present to direct and encourage them, but to assist with his own hands. The summer was, for the most part, spent in predatory expeditions, particularly to Ireland and the Western Isles. Harvest called them home to reap and gather in the crop. And the gloomy months of winter were devoted to festivity. Thus did he spend many years; till, embarking in what he intended as his last expedition, for which he had made great preparations, he took the city of Dublin, and imposed on the inhabitants very hard terms. They, however, afterwards placed an ambush, in which he and many of his followers were cut in pieces before they could extricate themselves. His death was lamented by those who had been devoted to his will and had tasted his bounty; and also by Earl Harold, who regretted the loss he had sustained, the more that he was soon afterwards involved in a war, in which his assistance would have been of the utmost importance.

The war to which we allude, took its origin from young Harold, the grandson of St. Ronald by his only daughter. He had now grown up, and imagined himself in a situation to attempt the recovery of his grandfather's part of the earldom.

To the monarchs both of Scotland and of Norway, he applied for investiture; and to neither of them was his application in vain. But though he had acquired from both a grant of the lands, and had been dignified with the title of an Earl; and though, in virtue of these, he had made a demand, in order to obtain peaceably his right, the temper of his opponent, no less than the spirit of the times, convinced him, that arms were the only means to which he could effectually have recourse for that purpose. He therefore levied forces with the utmost speed; he dispatched spies to examine the state of the islands; he consulted with his friends



what plan it was most expedient to adopt in that exigence ; and, while he was thus employed, the enemy's army appeared, which, on landing, showed great superiority in point of numbers. This circumstance, which might have damped his hopes, did not, however, intimidate him from preparing for the battle. The onset was desperate on both sides ; and they continued to fight with the greatest obstinacy, till the army of young Harold, dispirited by the fall of many of their leaders, took to flight ; during which Harold himself dropt down dead of the wounds that he had received in the engagement \*. His relationship to the saint produced wonders ; for a bright beam of light blazed on the spot where he fell ; the ground was held in veneration ; and on it a church was erected to perpetuate its sanctity.

After this victory, which added splendour to the arms of Harold, he found no difficulty in subduing the whole of Caithness ; but he had scarcely returned to Orkney in triumph, on account of that conquest, when he was apprised of a much more formidable enemy.

The King of Scotland had no sooner heard what had been done in the North, and in particular of the death of young Harold, on whom he had conferred the county of Caithness, than he expressed his indignation at the treatment which that Prince had met with, and threatened to take signal vengeance on the Earl of Orkney. To show that he was in earnest, he sent messengers to Reginald, son of Gudrod, king of the Western Isles, to state the provocation which he had received from Harold, and to take the proper measures to engage him to avenge his cause. This man was one of the most noted warriors of the West, and, like many of the ancients, had not been under a roof for three successive years. Fond of hazardous enterprise, he readily undertook the task, for which he immediately prepared, and soon recovered Caithness ; and to render his service still more complete before he returned home, he established governors for keeping the country in subjection, and for the administration of civil affairs.

Harold, in the mean time, dissembled his knowledge of these transactions, as well as of the King's interference and designs, till the departure of Re-

\* Torfæus.



ginald ; which had no sooner happened, than he dispatched trusty servants to cut off these rulers, and soon followed with a large army himself, which he landed at the town of Thurso, and threw the inhabitants into the greatest consternation.

John, the Bishop, in order to allay their fears, undertook to mediate in their favour, and advanced boldly to meet the Earl for that purpose ; but the bishop was no sooner in his power, than he, regardless of his sacred character, ordered him to be mutilated in the most barbarous manner. Dissatisfied even with this act of vengeance, he entered the town, fined some of the people ; others he punished in their persons ; and compelled all of them, without distinction, to swear allegiance to him as their sovereign lord.

Deputies from that county soon found their way to the Scottish throne, instructed to make loud complaints of these, and many other acts of oppression. The Prince who then ruled was so enraged, that he raised a great army, which he marched expeditiously to the confines of Caithness, in order to take vengeance on the Earl for thus daring to insult his authority.

Harold, on the other hand, was not an idle spectator of his preparations ; nor was he destitute of means for his own defence ; for he had collected a band of brave warriors, to the number of upwards of seven thousand, with whom he determined to dispute the victory with the Scottish monarch, provided honourable terms of accommodation could not be obtained. He thought it prudent, however, to sound the royal inclination upon that subject, and ambassadors were dispatched with overtures for that effect ; in consequence of which, he obtained pardon for the outrages he had committed, and was reinstated in the possession of Caithness, as formerly enjoyed ; on the very hard condition, however, that both he and the inhabitants should consent to pay no less than a fourth part of their property to the King.

His son Torphin was, either on this or some subsequent occasion of the same nature, delivered to the King as an hostage, in security for his father's performing the stipulated terms ; and as these were not performed, the eyes of the unhappy youth were put out.

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Though William, the first resident prelate, was a man of much note, neither the exact time, nor the circumstances of his death, are mentioned; which, however, must have happened at a very advanced age, during the greatest part of which he seems to have discharged the duties of his sacred function, with honour to himself, and advantage to his country. To him succeeded another of the same name; but we are not informed how long William the Second filled the see, what character he bore, or how he conducted himself while he held that dignity. The only circumstance on record concerning him is his death, which took place towards the close of the twelfth century.

With his successor we are rather better acquainted, owing perhaps to this circumstance, that he was a native of these islands, and moreover of illustrious birth. His mother, Herbiorg, was a descendant of the Earls, and his father, Kolbem Hranga, was a man of much consideration and spirit: he built the castle of Weir, to which he gave his own name; and fortified it so strongly as, in that age, to be deemed impregnable.

Biran was the name of his son, who, in his youth, was of a promising genius, and instructed in those arts that qualified him for the profession of a northern bard or *scald*, which he seems to have followed for some time; he was afterwards raised to the episcopal dignity. He was much celebrated for the grandeur and power of his family, which was numerous; and no less for his own magnificence and generosity. He lived in terms of the most intimate friendship with Harold; and died, after he had discharged the duties of his sacred function for upwards of thirty years.

Soon after the agreement between the Earl and the King of Scotland, a great commotion arose in Norway, occasioned by a pretender to the Crown, whose interest Harold unfortunately supported; and such resentment did his conduct, in this respect, kindle in the breast of the successful monarch, that he was on the point of plunging the Earl into the deepest distress. To ward off the blow that threatened him, he repaired to the court of the offended sovereign, where his cause was powerfully pleaded, and where, on submitting himself to the royal clemency, he received assurance of personal safety, but was punished, for what was considered as his treason, by the loss of



of Shetland, which, on that account was taken from his earldom, and annexed to the Norwegian crown. Fines were also imposed on such of his friends and countrymen as had joined him in espousing the same unfortunate cause. But no sooner had Harold heard of the King's death, and that the kingdom was torn to pieces by new factions, than he considered himself as delivered from his engagement, took immediate possession of Shetland, and restored every thing in Orkney to the same state in which it had been previously to the late rebellion. This was among the last actions of that extraordinary Earl, whose life had been active and prosperous. He died at 1198.  
the advanced age of seventy-three years.

As he had received the first rudiments of his education from his mother Margaret, the most beautiful and accomplished, though at the same time the most crafty and ambitious woman of her age; and as he had been afterwards entrusted to the tuition of Thorbiorn, whose passions often ruled without controul; so, many of his actions showed but too plainly the influence of the example and education which he had received in early life.

His capacity was so extensive, that it fitted him almost equally for managing military operations, and conducting civil affairs: his mind was prudent and penetrating; his person stately and robust: but his countenance was unpleasant, and his ambition restless and inordinate.

David and John, his sons by a second marriage, succeeded him in the earldom of Orkney, as Henry, their elder brother of the half blood, had, by some means of which we have no information, obtained the earldom of Ross in Scotland. They seem both to have been men of a mild, placid, and moderate temper, as they lived in much greater concord than was common for persons of their station and circumstances in those turbulent days. Their country, under their influence, and in imitation of their example, enjoyed at the same time internal peace. But, though they were so fortunate as to preserve peace at home, they were not able to avoid being involved sometimes in the commotions and contests of their neighbours.

In almost all those convulsions that often shook, and sometimes overturned the throne of Norway, these islands were some way or other involved. If a pretender to the crown, the head of a faction, or the ring-



leader of a rebellion, had recourse, as they very often had, to this country, and were suffered to lurk in safety, or were not openly and directly opposed; both rulers and people were supposed to have approved of their measures, and to have been implicated in their guilt, and were therefore often condemned to share in their punishment.

This seems to have been the case, during the insurrection of the Bagli, which raged with such violence. The Earls, therefore, aware of the danger that threatened them, took the precaution to send their bishop as ambassador to Norway, to make, if possible, their peace with the crown. This he could not effect thoroughly; but prevailed so far as to procure them permission to appear in that country to plead their own cause. Instead of advancing any thing in their own vindication, they thought it more expedient to prostrate themselves at the foot of the throne. The King, as a punishment for what he considered a defection, exacted from them a large sum of money, by way of fine, and obliged them to deliver hostages, in security of their future loyalty; to which he also bound them by an oath: and afterwards, he not only granted them a plenary pardon, but restored to them their rights, and their former possessions.

About two years after the death of Earl David, who did not long survive this settlement, Sculi, who held the third part of Norway, began, from ambitious views, to meditate a new revolution. He therefore wrote letters, sealed with the royal signet, to solicit Earl John's assistance, and took many other steps in the prosecution of his design; but his ill-concerted plans were soon discovered, and as soon frustrated, and his premature attempts at innovation effectually crushed.

Soon after this, an event took place, that merits some attention; not only on account of its singular nature, but likewise as it is descriptive of the manners of that age. Immediately after the death of John bishop of Caithness, Adam, a foundling, was appointed his successor. He created much disturbance in that province, by his rigorous exaction of tithes; which, however, was not so much attributed to any avarice of his, as to the bad counsel which he had received from a monk of the name of Serlo, his companion. The people, notwithstanding, bore it with impatience; and when they found his demands not only severe, but increasing annually, they



they began to assemble together, in such a manner, as to show plainly that they were disposed to proceed to violent measures. They previously, however, found means to state to Earl John their oppressions, of which they complained bitterly, and intreated his interference to alleviate or remove them; and, when he declined interposing, their disappointment, co-operating with the remembrance of their sufferings, drove them to extremity. The hill on which they had convened was at no great distance; they rushed down it with impetuosity, and surrounded the bishop's palace, in an upper room of which, Adam himself, and the chief judge were then drinking; and when Serlo the monk sallied forth, with a design to attempt a pacification, he received, as the reward of his evil counsel, a blow on the face, that instantly proved mortal. Matters now wearing a very serious aspect, the prelate, proud and positive as he was, stooped to offer terms, which the wisest of the people would have probably accepted; but the multitude in the mean time hurried him to a small house, to which they set fire; and he was thus burnt to death, before his friends could get forward to extinguish the fire, or to rescue him. His body, which was found not very much burned, was buried with great solemnity.

Alexander, who then swayed the sceptre in Scotland, no sooner heard of his unhappy fate, than he made all the haste in his power to punish such atrocious offenders; and all of them suffered death, had their goods confiscated, were mutilated, proscribed, or driven into banishment.

Cælestine the Fourth, who then filled the papal throne, took also a deep concern in the matter; for he is said to have issued a bull, in which he thanked that monarch for asserting the honour of the church, in the signal punishment which he had inflicted on the murderers of the bishop; who, with his companion Serlo, obtained the crown of martyrdom, and a distinguished place in the Roman kalendar.

The rebellion of Sculi, like almost every other that happened in that country, seems to have involved the islands in fresh troubles; insomuch, that Earl John found himself under the necessity of going over to make his peace with King Haco, which he effected; and, in security for his future behaviour, left as an hostage his son Harold, who was afterwards drowned in that kingdom. From that time no unpleasant interference seems to have



taken place, no disturbance nor quarrels to have arisen between them: their respective duties appear to have been performed, and they themselves to have lived on terms of reciprocal amity.

In proof of this, it may be observed, that when the Earl was with the abbot of Icolmkil, and the bishop in that kingdom, he met with so much respect and attention, that, on his return home, he thought himself bound to send presents to the King; in return for which, he received, besides other articles of value, a beautiful ship, completely equipped.

Happy, perhaps, it would have been for him, and undoubtedly for his country, had he cultivated or preserved the same good understanding with Hanef, the King's servant and collector. This man had been stationed in Orkney for the purpose of collecting the fines imposed, and perhaps other revenues belonging to the sovereign; and, as the business was of a delicate nature, it required the utmost prudence and moderation. These qualities he does not seem to have possessed in a high degree; and they were by no means increased by his counsellors; among whom was a man of the name of Snackoll, a descendant of St. Ronald Earl of Orkney. Proud of his high birth, and ambitious to obtain wealth and honour, he pointed out the relation in which he stood to this illustrious Earl, stated the right he considered himself as having to his lands, and demanded them in form from the Earl; and, when he met with an absolute refusal, an altercation ensued, which so exasperated both parties, that Snackoll either apprehended, or pretended to apprehend, danger; and fled to Hanef for protection. As soon as autumn arrived, both parties, with their friends, went over to Caithness; and having procured lodgings in different inns in the town of Thurso, notice was brought to Hanef and his companions to be on their guard, because Earl John had determined that very night to put a period to their existence. Alarmed with this intelligence, they flew to arms, and assaulted the house in which the Earl then was, with fire and sword; and, while the unhappy victim fled into a cellar, to conceal himself among the casks, he was dragged forth and murdered.

Immediately after this cruel deed, Hanef, Snackoll, and their associates, dreading the resentment of the Earl's friends, suddenly left the place, went over to Orkney, and took possession of the castle in the island of Wier,  
built



built by Kolbem Hranga. This they immediately fortified, and carried into it arms, and such other articles as they considered necessary for a siege, which they daily expected. The event soon showed that their precautions were neither unnecessary nor fruitless; for the castle was soon invested by the Earl's friends, and for a long time defended boldly; till both parties, wearied with a siege to which they saw no end, agreed to a suspension of arms during the winter; and afterwards to state their respective differences, and submit to the decision of the King of Norway. The summer had no sooner arrived, than they, with a numerous train, repaired thither for that purpose; where they found Haco disposed to give a patient audience to the Earl's friends, but so enraged at the cruelty of the murderers, that he put some of them to death.

Many of the inhabitants had been involved in this contest, and had gone over as parties, witnesses or spectators, in order to bring it to a conclusion; but, on their returning home, a violent storm arose, in which all of them perished; and the loss which the country thus sustained was so great, that it was long before it recovered its former condition.

In the narrative of events from the Scandinavian conquest, we have hitherto had recourse for information to the Norwegian writers, of which the principal are the Orkneyinga Saga, and the celebrated Torfæus; though, for the sake of brevity, they have seldom been quoted. These, and the writers to whom they refer, we have preferred to the authors who have recorded the transactions of our own country; because they appeared more regular and consistent; and because, on account of the intimate connexion that subsisted between these islands and their country and its colonies, they had an opportunity of more authentic information.

After the death of Harold and his two sons, David and John, however, the information even from the Norwegian writers is less full and particular, though not less authentic. The cause of its deficiency in these respects may easily be pointed out. From that time these islands had less intercourse with Iceland, and they appeared of less consequence in the eyes of the mother country: the written records consequently would be much fewer; and some of these, amidst the convulsions and depredations of the north, were mutilated, and some entirely destroyed.

Still,



Still, however, we intend to follow Torfæus, as our best guide through the subsequent period ; calling in the aid of Scottish writers occasionally, to illustrate his obscurities, or to supply his defects, till we succeed in bringing down the narrative to the time when the islands were annexed to the crown of Scotland.

1231. Magnus the Second succeeded John in the earldom ; but whether he was his son or his brother, or a more remote relation, who, as heir at law, inherited his estate and honours, we have no documents that can enable us to determine. Some circumstances induce us to suppose, that he entered into possession soon after the murder of his kinsman : but as, in all the subsequent transactions respecting that matter, no mention is made of him, it is likely that, to preserve the peace of the country, he had carefully avoided taking any concern. From him, Alexander, King of Scotland, took the county of Sutherland, which had been considered before as constituting a part of the earldom. In his time a Jewish ship was lost here, probably of great value ; but we are not informed from what country she came, whither she was bound, or what were the articles of her cargo.

1239. Gibbon, or Gilbert, the First, we find his immediate successor in the earldom. He held that dignity at the time that young Prince Haco was, with his father's consent, and during his life, raised to the throne ; and all ranks in the kingdom, together with the inhabitants of Orkney and Shetland, swore fealty to him as their sovereign. He concurred with the King of the Isles in sending ambassadors to Haco, with information that commotions were rising in their respective countries. These, it is probable, owed their birth to foreign influence, and had been encouraged by Alexander the Second of Scotland, in consequence of his schemes of ambition. This prince was fond of arduous enterprise, and had formed the design of extending the limits of his kingdom, by recovering all the islands on the west borders of Scotland, which some of his ancestors had included in their dominion. To accomplish his purpose, he dispatched ambassadors to Haco, with instructions to claim them as a part of his territory, and to demand that they might be given up ; and if this requisition was not complied with, to offer a sum of money for their redemption. The demand met with a positive denial ; the offer was treated with disdain ; and after similar proposals



fals had been made and rejected, preparations for war soon took place, and an armament was soon in readiness, so powerful, that the sovereign, in the pride of his strength, boasted that he would never desist till he had brought the islands around him under the yoke. Before he began his operations, he sent messengers to the king of the Hæbudæ, with offers of perpetual and much more extensive territories in Scotland, than those he held in the islands, on condition that he would desert the interest of Haco, and relinquish his fealty to him, by delivering into his hands the four castles which that monarch had committed to his charge. That prince, however, greatly to his honour, steadfastly adhered to his integrity, notwithstanding these temptations that were thrown in his way; and, to avoid the effects of the king's resentment, fled to the island of Lewis. The Scottish monarch, in the mean time, bent on his purpose, took steps to invade the islands; and, as he lay in the harbour of Kialarsound, pondering on the nature, extent, and probable consequences of the undertaking in which he had embarked, he fell into a profound sleep, in which he imagined there appeared to him three men, very different in their form, stature and aspect; who all, however, concurred in dissuading him from the execution of his design, and exhorted him to proceed no farther, but return home in peace. Struck with the strangeness of the vision, he communicated to his friends what he had heard and seen; when, with one voice, they advised him to listen to the admonition that had been given him, and desist from the business which he had begun. But, disregarding the admonition of the phantom, (which, in that ignorant and superstitious age, argued no small degree of resolution), and paying as little attention to the arguments of his friends, he obstinately persisted in his resolution to conquer, till a distemper suddenly seized him, which was soon fatal. At this unexpected and melancholy event, the commanders of his fleet, and of his army, abandoned all farther thoughts of the expedition, and, returning home, they placed his son Alexander the Third, though then a boy, on his father's throne.

The credulous islanders asserted, that the three persons who appeared to the King in his dream, to dissuade him from invading their country, were St. Olaus King of Norway, St. Magnus Earl of Orkney, and St. Columba of Iona, or Icolmkill.



1246. The very same year that Bishop Biarn, who had acted so conspicuous a part, died, Jofuir was appointed in his room. Neither his talents nor his character are known. He held the Episcopal dignity twenty-three years, To him succeeded Hervey, or Hausir, after an interval of two years. He  
 1269. filled the see (but in what manner we know not) for the space of twenty-one years.  
 1256. Gibbon, or Gilbert, the Second, was the son of the former Earl of the same name. In the earldom to which he succeeded on his father's death, he held both Orkney and Caithness.\* Some time after his accession to that dignity, he seems to have gone over to Norway; for we find him, though under another name, embarking with Haco, in his celebrated expedition against the King of Scotland.

That monarch had received intelligence by letter, that a son of the Earl of Ross had committed dreadful ravages in the Western Islands, destroyed their towns, burnt their churches and monasteries, and butchered the inhabitants, without regard to age or condition. He was also informed, that danger threatened them from another quarter, as the young King of Scotland, who had inherited his father's undaunted and ambitious spirit, had determined to subject the whole of these islands to his dominion. Sympathising with the miserable condition of such a multitude of people, and unwilling that such an extent of territory as they occupied should be torn from his ally, or wrested out of his own hands, he employed the ensuing spring and summer in equipping a vast fleet, with which he sailed, and arrived first at Shetland, and then at Orkney, and anchored in the harbour of Elwick, in Shapinsay, near Kirkwall. He soon sailed for South Ronaldsay, whence he sent messengers to Caithness to demand tribute, threatening to desolate their country with fire and sword if they refused; but, as his demand was granted, he had no cause to put his threats in execution. During the time he lay in one of the harbours of that island, an almost total eclipse of the sun happened. By a mind less firm and vigorous than his, the phenomenon might have been considered as an unlucky omen: But Haco, disregarding it, soon afterwards sailed from this country with



unabated courage, and boldly entered the Western Isles, from some of which he received succours; some he confirmed in their loyalty; others he intimidated or subdued; and success followed him wherever he went, till he reached Cantire, Arran, and the Cumbræes, which were either unable, or unwilling, to give him any opposition.

In the mean time, Alexander, watching the rapidity of his progress, and dreading, no doubt, that after the islands had come under his yoke, Haco might direct his force against Scotland, sent ambassadors to treat of peace; but the terms which they proposed to each other for that purpose were such, as soon put an end to the negotiation. Nothing could be more against the interest of Haco than delay; neither did it suit his natural disposition: and therefore, when he could neither obtain peace, on what he judged equitable terms, nor saw any prospect that the Scots would come to an engagement, he dispatched a party well fitted for such a service, to plunder their country, in order to rouse their passions, and provoke them to a general action. Even this insulting provocation had not the desired effect.

The well-known character of Alexander the Third, however, and the bravery of his subjects, give us every reason to believe, that their declining to engage arose from no dastardly spirit, but was the effect of a wise plan of procrastination, to which they were determined to adhere, founded on the circumstances of the Norwegians.

These people had been long from home; the campaign had been as troublesome as it had been tedious; and the year was so far advanced, that storms were likely soon to arise, which, in these seas, amidst tides, rocks, and shallows, might in a great measure weaken, if not totally destroy, their armament. To their situation, in these respects, the Scots were no strangers; nor in the disasters which they expected, were they disappointed; for, while their ships were at anchor in the road, a violent tempest arose, in which some of them run foul of each other; some were shattered, some stranded, and some sunk. The Scots saw the danger into which they were thrown; and, in that hour of calamity attacked them with vigour, in hopes of obtaining an easy and decisive victory. In this, however, they were disappointed; for those that were on land, few as they were in comparison



of their foes, boldly sustained the shock, and defended themselves till their friends came up to their assistance, when the conflict was both long and desperate; and, after many vicissitudes of fortune, they seem to have been finally victorious.

Haco, next day, sent men ashore to examine the field of battle, and collect the bodies of the slain, which he honoured with a decent interment; and having embarked his troops, and burnt such of his ships as had run aground, he steered his course northward; and, after a circuitous voyage of some length, he again arrived in Orkney. Here he retained twenty ships, having sent the rest home; and as he had been prevented, by contrary winds and stormy weather, from sailing, he resolved, with his nobility, to spend the winter in Kirkwall. He had for a lodging the upper story of the Bishop's palace, which served to accommodate him and his principal servants; while the other men of rank, his officers and their dependants, were quartered through the other parts of the country. That this might be done with more regularity and convenience, the islands were divided into Euslands, or Ouncelands, every one of which made the eighth part of a Markland, and was deemed sufficient for the support of a chief and his soldiers.

Debilitated with the extraordinary fatigues of the campaign, and distressed with sorrow for the loss of men and ships which he had sustained, he no sooner reached the land, than he felt the attacks of a distemper, which, in a short time, confined him to bed. He soon perceived that his life was in danger, when he appointed legacies for his courtiers and servants; wrote to his son Magnus instructions concerning the management of his affairs; received extreme unction from the hands of the prelates; and, on the night of the seventh day after the feast of St. Lucia, expired. His body was soon afterwards conveyed to an upper apartment in the episcopal palace, dressed in a princely robe, with a garland on his head, in an elegant coffin, to lye for some time in state. The hall where it thus lay, was superbly illuminated; into which were admitted the bishops, clergy, and superior orders of courtiers, to take a last view of their beloved Sovereign; and, when these ceremonies were over, it was carried to the cathedral of St. Magnus, put into an outer coffin, and placed before St.



Magnus's shrine, where, in a convention of the nobles, it was determined to watch it, by turns, during the winter.

Agreeably to his commands, his debt and legacies were, during Christmas, all paid off; and, as soon as the spring arrived, and the weather permitted, his remains were removed from the church to the Bay of Scapa, where they were put on board the Admiral's galley, and conveyed to Bergen. His son Magnus, who now ascended the throne, had no sooner finished the obsequies of his father, in a manner suitable to his dignity, than he began to turn his thoughts to the state of his kingdom, and the posture of public affairs. In particular, he directed his attention to the Western Isles, which formed a remote province in the vicinity of a foreign kingdom, that was occupied by a warlike people, and governed by a Prince of the same brave and independent spirit, to whom many of the leaders in these islands were much attached. He considered the expence of blood and treasure that it would require to preserve in subjection such a province, and the small advantage, in the end, it was likely to bring to the state. To this Prince, peace was also far more pleasant than the din of arms; and these considerations rendered him more than ordinarily anxious to conclude a peace with the Scots.

This was evidently the interest of the one kingdom, no less than of the other, and particularly so of the islands, which had been so long unhappily the object of dispute; of which all parties at length became so sensible, that a negotiation was entered into, and a peace established. The terms on which it was concluded were, that the Isle of Man, the Hæbudæ, and all the rest, except Orkney and Shetland, should be ceded to the Scots, who, on their part, agreed to pay a thousand marks Sterling within the space of the four subsequent years, and a hundred marks annually ever afterwards, in compensation for the advantages which they had acquired.

With respect to the expedition that preceded this treaty, the writers of the two countries do not agree; since, while those of the one give the facts as stated in the above narrative, those of the other assert, that the islands were forcibly taken from Haco; who, by their account, had his numerous army cut to pieces, and the few, that remained, completely subdued. This account, however, is improbable; because, had matters been



as they represent them, his son could not in the treaty have obtained such favourable terms. However this may be, the Earl of Orkney, in whose time these transactions happened (in which, perhaps, he bore a share), died soon afterwards, and left a daughter, of the name of Matilda, and a son, who succeeded him.

1267. Magnus the Third was the name of this son; who possessed the same extent of territory which his father had done: And the only event that deserves notice in his time, is a contract of privileges, entered into between him and Magnus King of Norway. Little more is said of him, than that he left two sons, both of whom, in succession, enjoyed his estate and honours.

1274. Magnus the Fourth was the eldest of these; who, after he had enjoyed his father's fortune for the space of two years, was, on the festival of St. Olave, formally created an Earl by King Magnus of Norway. He died without children, and was succeeded by John his brother.

1284. John had both Caithness and Orkney in his earldom; and was a man of such consequence, as to marry a daughter of Eric King of Norway.

1305. Magnus the Fifth was the son of John, and most probably the offspring of that marriage. He seems to have been a Prince of a noble and independent spirit; for, in the year 1320, he subscribed the famous letter to the Pope, along with the other earls, barons, freeholders, and community of Scotland\*. His estate extended over Caithness as well as the Isles; and it was in his time, and perhaps in his favour, that the King of Norway prohibited any within his kingdom to bear the title of an Earl, except the King's sons and the Earls of Orkney. Argisel and Eringisel, who are mentioned by one author † only as his successors, appear to have been one and the same person; and if any such person ever existed (which is at least doubtful), it is probable that he possessed the title only, without the authority or the emoluments of the earldom. We are led to doubt his existence, because no mention is made of any such Earl in that respectable and authentic monument ‡ which was extracted by authority from the archives

\* Anderson's Diplom. et Numism. † Torseus. ‡ Diplom. App. No. 1.



of these islands; and, therefore, there is reason to conclude that the name has, by some mistake or other, crept into the annals.

The Episcopal see of this place we have already seen filled by Hervey or Hausir, who, it would appear, was the same person with Henry. He seems to have shared the esteem and confidence of Haco; and was frequently about him in his celebrated expeditions. He died six years after that mo- 1270.  
narch; and was succeeded, two years afterwards, by Peter, who appears to have been a man of much consequence. Eric King of Norway appointed him one of the Commissioners for negotiating a marriage between him and Margaret, a daughter of Alexander the Third King of Scotland. The treaty was finally concluded at Roxburgh, on the festival of the Apostle St. James, in the year 1281\*; and the Bishop died three years after its conclusion †.

Two years after the death of this prelate, Dolgfennus was appointed his 1286.  
successor; who seems to have discharged the sacred function for upwards of twenty years.

William was next appointed to that office. He is mentioned in an in- 1310.  
denture between Robert the First, King of Scotland, and Haco the Fifth, King of Norway, at Inverness. This prelate, some years after his appointment, incurred the imputation of suffering irregularities in his province, and of even wanting decorum in his own character. In order to ascertain the truth or falsehood of this, his superior the Archbishop of Nidaros in 1319.  
Norway nominated two confidential persons, whom he invested with powers for that purpose. These men, in executing the trust reposed in them, at first found little to blame; but afterwards, on a more complete investigation, they had reason to believe that the reports in circulation to the Bishop's prejudice were too well founded; the grounds of which they had no sooner related to their constituent, than he pronounced sentence against him, in virtue of his paramount authority ‡. His resentment against William on this account, however, seems to have been soon appeased; for, not long afterwards, we find him mentioned among other prelates who had been called to bear testimony to some Popish deeds §. This apparent good

\* Rymer. † Torfaus. ‡ Thorkelin's Fragments of Eng. and Irish Hist. § Idem.

understanding,



understanding, indeed, was but of short duration; as he again incurred the displeasure of the Archbishop, first by his undue interference, respecting the funeral of a lady of distinction, and afterwards by not only throwing into prison, but shipping off all the effects of one of the canons of his own country, whom the Archbishops had thought proper to appoint to collect one of the taxes\*.

This tax, which bore the name of St. Peter's Penny, may have been introduced from England, where one of the same name was raised for the benefit of the Papal see for several centuries, and, as it had been found inconsistent with the condition of the people, seldom collected; so that the attempt to collect it now, might have appeared an act of oppression; and the Bishop's having viewed it in that light, might have been the cause of his treating the collector with such extreme severity. In some way or other, it is probable he had considered it as contrary to law or justice; since, in other cases, he was so far from giving opposition to customary exactions, that, on a certain occasion, he not only acknowledged the Papal tithes due, but readily granted his obligation for their payment, which was afterwards unquestionably fulfilled here, as well as it was in Shetland\*.

To William succeeded another of the same name, who was basely murdered in 1383; but the cause of that infamous deed, the perpetrator, and the circumstances, are unknown†.

The male line of the ancient earls of Orkney had now failed in the person of Magnus the Fifth; and a new race, sprung from a female branch, were exalted to that dignity, who were not only natives of Scotland, but internally connected with that kingdom.

For several centuries past, this earldom had made a conspicuous figure in the annals of the north, not only on account of the extent of its territory, but for the spirit of its rulers and people, and its respectable and splendid connexions. Besides Orkney, which was always considered as the centre of operation, and the seat of government, where the court and little parliament were kept, the laws enacted, and justice administered, it contained not only Shetland, but the counties of Ross, and Sutherland,

\* Thork. Fragments of Eng. and Irish Hist.

† Idem.

‡ Torfæus, p. 177.



and Caithness, and had rendered tributary the Hæbudæ, which were for some time subjected to its dominion. If to this be added the nature of the soil and its particular situation, lying along the Friths of Murray, Dornoch, and Pentland, and in the midst of the ocean that washes the shores of the West Highlands, and intersects the Western and Northern Isles, it will appear evident that the people must have subsisted, in a great measure, by hunting and fishing; and this mode of life would render them so fit to be sailors and soldiers, as would naturally give the earldom a signal influence in both the naval and military transactions of those times.

Moreover, the ancient counts that so long held it, were all of them men of high rank, and some of them of the most splendid talents. They were connected, by the ties of blood, with all the monarchs that then ruled the north; and, in the retinue they kept at home, as well as in the force they carried abroad, had much more the appearance of sovereigns, than of subjects, even of the highest denomination. But, amidst all their grandeur, power, and dignity, it is pleasing to observe, that their imitation of the magnificence of Royalty did not lead them to invade the rights of the inferior orders, who seem to have been destitute neither of the spirit of independence nor of liberty. The inferior nobility and the gentry were constantly their companions in peace, and their captains in war; they assisted them with their counsel in any emergency; and in those disputes that took place between the contending earls, or such as were aspiring to that dignity, they were frequently appealed to, or called in as umpires; and, notwithstanding the ferocity of the age, in which arms too often triumphed over justice, their awards were submitted to cheerfully. In short, the different orders seem to have respected the rights of each other; the lower ranks looked up to their superiors with reverence; the higher classes regarded those beneath them with unaffected kindness; and, while all were united in the bonds of mutual interest and affection, the country in which they lived was prosperous and happy, respectable in the eyes of its friends, and formidable in those of its enemies.

Magnus the Fifth, the last of the Norwegian Earls, left only one daughter, who was married to Malis Earl of Stratherne, in Scotland, who probably enjoyed the earldom in right of his wife without question, as no  
formal



formal investiture seems either to have been sought for or obtained. A claim, however, was made for this purpose, by one Malis, in all probability a son of that marriage, and a caveat entered to secure the revenues in the country, till he had time to take the steps that were necessary for obtaining what he considered his right.

This Malis, who was also Earl of Stratherne, had been twice married; first to a daughter of the Earl of Monteith, by whom he had a daughter of the name of Matilda, afterwards married to Weyland de Ard. By his second wife, who was a daughter of the Earl of Ross, he had four daughters; the eldest of whom was married to William St. Clare, Baron of Rosslyn; the second, to Ginfel de Swetherick; the third to Gothred de Spere; and the youngest died unmarried. Weyland de Ard had, by his wife Matilda, a son named Alexander, who inherited the earldom of Caithness and a certain proportion of Orkney, in right of his mother; but he alienated the former to Robert the First, King of Scotland; and, after he had enjoyed his share, and been governor of the latter only for a short time, died without children.

Even in his lifetime, however, and while the descendants of the other sisters were in possession of their respective parts of the earldom, Henry Sinclair, son of William by the eldest daughter of the second marriage, claimed the whole earldom, in right of his grandfather; and Haco King of Norway granted it without hesitation.

He was perhaps induced to admit a claim so evidently contrary to justice, on account of the troubles in which the country had been involved for want of some person invested with sufficient power, and endued with adequate talents to undertake the administration.

Ever since the death of Magnus the Fifth, no earl appears to have resided in Orkney; and indeed it was not to have been expected, since both his son-in-law Malis Earl of Stratherne, and his grandson of the same name, had not only interest, but connexions sufficient to fix them in another country. The female offspring of the latter, and their descendants (among whom the earldom seems to have been divided), could rule only with a divided and feeble authority. The consequences were, what might have been naturally expected; commotions at home, where  
the



the people were all nearly of the same rank and fortune; and destructive depredations from abroad, especially by multitudes of rovers from Scotland.

In this feeble and distracted state, Henry Sinclair obtained a grant of them, and he seems to have embraced the first favourable moment to represent, in strong terms, their deplorable condition to his Sovereign. The prince who then swayed the Scottish sceptre readily listened to his representation and complaints; and, offended at the irregularity of his own people, as well as moved with compassion for the unhappy sufferers, he issued a proclamation, prohibiting, under the severest penalties, any of his subjects from entering Orkney, except for the sake of trade; these islands having been almost desolated by people from his country. This peremptory mandate seems to have had the desired effect.

To prevent any such calamity in future, as well as the anarchy that 1379. had prevailed in the earldom. Earl Henry Sinclair wished to strengthen his power, and confirm his right; and for this purpose repaired to Norway, where the investiture which he had formerly obtained was renewed. As he was, however, the subject of another prince, a stranger in that kingdom, and a native of another, this renewal or confirmation was granted on severe and heavy conditions. These were, that he should consider the grant as an act of royal favour, and be bound always to fidelity: that he should serve his sovereign, on three months previous notice, with one hundred men completely armed, to be maintained while on actual service at the King's expence: that he should defend Orkney and Shetland, not only with the native force of the islands, but with the whole power of his family connexions: that he should exert both these powers in aid of the King of Norway, in case he was at any time attacked by a foreign state: that he should build no fort or castle within the precincts of the earldom, without the royal consent: that he should preserve to the inhabitants the secure possession of their laws, rights and privileges, and neither alienate nor pledge the earldom, nor the right to it, on any account: that he should be responsible for his administration, according to the laws of Norway, and attend his Majesty in the national council, or on any other just cause: that he should take no part with the Bishop of Orkney, to his prejudice,



or enter into a contract with him, without the King's approbation or consent: that in case there should be a failure of heirs-male, the earldom should revert to his Majesty; and, finally, that the Earl should pay a thousand nobles of gold, English money \*.

Though these terms were hard, several Scottish prelates, noblemen and gentlemen, engaged as sureties for their performance; and, as a farther security, hostages were given and retained in that kingdom. The Earl, who was now finally established in his authority, seems, during his residence at court to have gained the favour of the sovereign; and he was in high esteem at home, both on account of his personal qualities, and his being descended from one of the first families in Scotland. His ancestors had originally come from France with William the Conqueror, and when that successful and haughty adventurer suffered them to go unrewarded, they left his court in disgust, and, in expectation of more favour, resorted to that of the neighbouring state. There they met with a courteous reception; and gaining the confidence of the prince, and the esteem of the people, soon rose to distinction and wealth; and by means of their loyalty, talents and virtues, obtained some of the highest offices, which they filled with advantage to the kingdom, and credit to themselves.

- These considerations, perhaps, separately, or in conjunction with the dignity to which he had been so recently raised, were the cause that this earl was ranked next to the archbishops, and before all the bishops and senators of the country, in subscribing a recognizance of Eric of Pomerania, as just and lawful heir to the Norwegian crown. He was also present,
1388. next year, in a convention of the states, assembled for the purpose of its confirmation. After his elevation, to the displeasure, if not to the detriment or exclusion of his relations, whose rights were nearly equal to his own, his cousin Malis Spere for some time resided in Shetland, where it is probable he was active in stirring up dissensions against the Earl, and interfering with him in the management or in the collection of the revenues of the earldom. For these, or similar reasons, a conflict happened between him and the Earl, in which Malis Spere, with seven of his companions,
1391. was slain, and the rest with difficulty escaped, and reached Norway in a boat.

\* Torfæus.



This illustrious Earl was first married to a daughter of the King of Denmark, by whom he had no issue; and afterwards to Jean, daughter of Walter Haliburton, Lord Dirleton, by whom he had, besides other children, a son, who succeeded him.

Henry Sinclair was the name of that son, who seems to have entered into the immediate possession of the earldom on the death of his father, which, there is reason to conclude, happened soon after the unhappy affair with his cousin in Shetland. He appears to have been a person of no less consequence than his father, of which the honourable appointment he about this time obtained, affords satisfactory evidence.

Scotland was then in such a turbulent state, and the arm of government so feeble, that it was deemed unsafe for the young prince to remain for his education in his own country; and France, which had been the old friend and faithful ally of the nation, was considered as the place where he could be instructed with equal safety and honour in those arts that became his high dignity. Henry Earl of Orkney was the principal person to whom James the First was entrusted on that occasion, who had instructions to carry him thither; and while he was faithfully discharging the trust reposed in him, and sailing along the east coast, he landed at Flamborough, (either driven in by stress of weather, or with a design to give the prince relief from a violent sea-sickness), where both were detained, though in the time of a truce, and, by order of the King of England, carried prisoners to London\*.

The prince was long kept in that country; but the Earl of Orkney was soon liberated, or rather obtained leave of his Majesty to return to Scotland, upon leaving his brother John as an hostage for his returning as prisoner into England by the following Christmas†. The very next year, he, with a son of the Duke of Albany, and others, obtained letters of safe conduct for coming into England, in order to be received as hostages for the Earl of Douglas‡. He himself granted a power to his brother John, to redeem, in his name, from Sir Walter de Lindsay, the lands of Johnston and Thurmiston, in the shire of Mearns§. The same John received from Henry V. a passport

\* Buchan. Hist. Scot. † Fœd. Ang. ‡ Ibid. § Hay's Memoirs.



into England, in order to treat of the redemption of the King of Scots\*; and Henry himself another from the same prince, for coming into England with a retinue of twenty persons of whatever degree, to remain till the August following †. John did homage to the king of Denmark; but whether on his own account, or in name of his brother Henry, who  
 1420. had commissioned him specially for that effect, there is no certainty. The Earl died two years afterwards, leaving a son named William, by his wife Algidia, a grand-daughter of Robert the Second, King of Scotland.

William Sinclair succeeded his father in the earldom, of which he had scarcely been in possession one year, when he was proposed as one of the hostages to be given for the redemption of James the First; and when that redemption could not be obtained, he was soon afterwards put in the list of nobles that received a passport for himself and twenty-four persons to visit James King of Scots, then a prisoner in England ‡.

His father, almost during his whole life, had been employed in business of the utmost importance, and, for this reason, found little leisure to cultivate the acquaintance of that Sovereign, of whom he held the earldom, or to renew the obligations, to which his father, on receiving the investiture, had become bound. His son William had begun the same active and honourable course, and was likely to be guilty of the same neglect; and perhaps the Danish Monarch was not much displeased to see such powerful subjects of another prince fail to perform the conditions stipulated on obtaining the grant, that he might have a plausible pretext for depriving them of the possession.

The two Bishops of Orkney, who lived before this Earl, seem to have made no great figure in public affairs, as they perhaps confined themselves to their sacred function. The name of the first was William, who was appointed in thirteen hundred and ninety, and is mentioned in the time of  
 1394. Robert the Third, King of Scotland §. His successor, whose name was Henry, appears to have lived as privately; for the only time he is mentioned, is in an assembly of the prelates of Denmark and Norway, held for a special purpose at Helsingburg ||.

\* Fæd. Ang. † Ibid. ‡ Ibid. § Spottiswoode. || Torſæus.



Thomas de Tulloch, or Tholack, who succeeded him in the see, and 1422.  
 was contemporary with Earl William, was a man of far more celebrity.  
 Letters of safe-conduct were granted to him and eight persons in his retinue,  
 for a whole year, by Henry the Sixth, King of England \*. He seems to  
 have been in much esteem with his own Sovereign ; for, when neither Earl  
 William nor his father had acknowledged his supremacy, Eric committed  
 the Earldom to him, not as a pledge, or in security for debt, but as a solemn  
 trust, to be executed with fidelity, and recalled at the pleasure of the King,  
 or that of any of his lawful successors. This appears evident from the  
 tenor of his letters, on receipt of the commission, which expressly declare,  
 that he will govern the people with equity, and according to law ; maintain  
 peace among them, to the utmost of his ability ; and whenever it should  
 please his Majesty, from whom he received the trust, or any of his succes-  
 sors to demand restitution, he would readily deliver into their hands, not  
 only the castle of Kirkwall, but the whole earldom †.

Though this prelate seems to have been well qualified for the trust, in  
 as far as he had the confidence of the prince, as well as the affection of the  
 people, yet, to whatever cause it was owing, his management, at this time,  
 was only of one year's duration.

A Scottish gentleman, whose name was David Meyner, of Weims, suc- 1423.  
 ceeded him in the government ; and the Bishop himself, and Walter Fraser,  
 subscribed his obligation as sureties. This precaution, however, was of no  
 effect, as it could not supply the defect of principle, nor restrain within  
 due bounds, a man who seems to have been naturally addicted to arbitrary  
 sway and rapine. Within four years, his depravity displayed itself in such  
 various acts of wickedness, that the people who groaned under his power,  
 brought against him no fewer than thirty-five articles of accusation, which,  
 on inquiry, proved to be so well founded, that the tyrant was compelled to  
 abandon his situation, or was driven from it with disgrace ‡. To rectify  
 the disorders which such an administration must have produced, and restore 1427.  
 among the people contentment and tranquillity, Bishop Thomas, whose  
 character was firmly established, was, on the same conditions as before, re-

\* Rymer.

† Torſæus.

‡ Ibid.



inflated in the government of the earldom, which, for seven years, he held with honour.

If we had not known the extensive property that Earl William possessed in his own country, the high dignity to which he had been raised, and the important duties which he had been called to perform, we should have been at a loss to assign reasons for the time he had suffered to elapse, previously to his application for the investiture of his estate. An opportunity, however, now occurred, which he embraced for that purpose, and his attempts were crowned with final success. But, even before this period, his interest does not seem to have been altogether neglected, since one of the articles of charge against Meyner was, that he had appropriated to himself rents which belonged to the Earl, and had refused to set the public seal to the evidence which he had brought to prove his rights.

Between his father's death and his preferring his claim, doubts had arisen respecting his right; and other claimants had, it is probable, appeared, to avail themselves of that doubt. To clear up this matter, and to free himself from applications from other quarters, as well as to do justice to this celebrated character, Eric, King of Norway issued an order to Thomas Bishop of Orkney and others, to search the archives, records, and all other evidences, in order to ascertain the point in dispute. That respectable prelate joined those that were named with him, to form a venerable jury for executing the business; and after having, in the most solemn manner, traced his pedigree from the very first of the Earls, ascertained William's right beyond the possibility of contradiction\*. As soon as this was reported, he obtained investiture, and on the very same terms on which it had been formerly obtained by Henry Sinclair his grandfather.

1434.

This last nobleman, it would appear, built the castle of Kirkwall, without the authority or consent of his Sovereign, and contrary to the obligation into which he had himself entered; and William, to atone for that transgression, engaged to deliver it up, on receiving his Majesty's mandate for that purpose; and many of his countrymen of rank and fortune became his sureties for fulfilling his engagements in this and other respects.

\* Diploma or Deduction. *Vide* Appendix No. I. & II.



Ever since the Western Isles were ceded to the crown of Scotland, the money stipulated to be given on that account had been neglected to be paid ; and, in a long course of years, the principal and interest had arisen to a considerable amount. A threatening demand was made for it about this time by Christian the First, who, some years before, had ascended the Danish throne. He was the first of the house of Oldenburg, and had at last obtained the sceptre of the three northern kingdoms, Denmark, Sweden, and Norway. He concluded an alliance with France, in order to fix himself more firmly in the government. In the treaty, that formed and secured that alliance, the *annual* of Norway (as this sum is usually denominated) was not forgotten ; for a special article was inserted, that in case any dispute should arise with the Scottish Monarch on that head, recourse should be had for assistance to their new ally, the King of France.

The object was worthy of attention, as the sum demanded was large. Though only a hundred marks had been the sum stipulated to be paid annually, the penalty of ten thousand for each failure was also charged ; and the aggregate sum that was due, in the space of forty years neglect of payment, had arisen to nearly ten millions sterling of our present money \*. Several fruitless negotiations were therefore entered into respecting the payment ; and when both sides saw evidently that a rupture was likely to happen, they agreed to submit the matter to the arbitration of France.

Commissioners accordingly appeared for that purpose before Charles the reigning Monarch, who, averse to offend either of the parties, availed himself of some circumstances that occurred, as a pretext for delay ; and, in the mean time, recommended, as a measure of prudence, a marriage between the young prince of Scotland and the princess of Denmark, as an easy and honourable method of terminating their differences. After some deliberation, the Scottish commissioners, who seem to have been invested with powers for that purpose, consented to the measure, on condition that the arrears of the *annual* were paid, and the payment for ever remitted ; Orkney and Shetland given up to Scotland ; and that a hundred thou-

\* Mr. Pinkerton's History of Scotland.



and crowns should be given by Christian, for the purpose of decorating the royal bride his daughter, in a manner suitable to the dignity of both kingdoms.

The Danish commissioners, as they seem to have had no powers for consenting to such a measure, demurred, and craved time to consult their court; and while they were thus employed, the bursting of a gun at the siege of Roxburgh put an end to King James the Second's life. This event threw the nation into the greatest confusion, as the prince was a minor. The cabinet of Paris, therefore, stopped their proceedings, and recommended deliberation.

Some years after James the Third had ascended the throne, Christian renewed his demand, of payment of the *annual*, accompanied, however, with the sincerest professions of regard, and ardent wishes of amity with the King of Scotland.

James, in return, was no less liberal in expressions of friendship for the Danish Monarch, whose country had not only proximity of situation, but commercial connexions with his own, and promised to send ambassadors, properly empowered and entrusted, to settle every point in dispute between the two crowns.

Ample powers were of consequence immediately conferred on commissioners, the chief of whom were Lord Evandale, Chancellor of Scotland, Boyd Earl of Arran, and the Bishops of Orkney and Glasgow, to visit several of the courts of Europe, in order to make choice of a wife for their young Sovereign, and even to conclude a marriage, if they found that they could do it on advantageous terms.

Notwithstanding the comprehensive nature of their commission, which seems to have been intended either to flatter Denmark, by the preference that should be given, or to provide against a failure in that country, the ambassadors went directly to Copenhagen, where they waited the return of the Monarch from his newly acquired Swedish dominions.

Christian was one of the most potent princes that ever sat on the Danish throne. Besides the three northern kingdoms, of which he was in possession, he had acquired the sovereignty of Sleswick and Holstein, all of which, united, formed an empire very considerable in extent and population. He



was pious, prudent, generous, and pacific; and such was the opinion entertained of his power, talents, and virtues, that he was frequently chosen as an arbiter to decide the differences among contending powers. But the frequent commotions that had arisen in Sweden, and the immense expence of some of his new acquisitions, had drained his treasury to such an uncommon degree, that he was often at a loss for money. No prince, however, who had swayed the sceptre of that country, had ever made his influence so conspicuous in Europe; and the alliance which he had formed with France against England, rendered Scotland a kingdom whose friendship was of the utmost consequence to promote his interest and second his views.

If these circumstances be duly weighed, in connexion with others that might be stated, we shall cease to wonder at the conduct of Christian in parting with those islands, which constituted a considerable, though remote province, that had now, in the course of succession, come into the hands of a powerful Scottish family, whose fidelity must have been eventually uncertain and precarious.

To Scotland they presented widely different, and much greater advantages. They lay in the vicinity of that kingdom, a subject of which possessed them; they were generally believed to have made formerly a province of that country, from which they had been torn by maritime power; and to unite them again to that kingdom, from which they had thus been taken, was considered as an object, not only of interest, but of honour.

To these considerations the commissioners were neither blind nor inattentive; and they discharged the trust reposed in them with a zeal and a prudence that did equal credit to the government by which they were appointed, and to themselves.

In the course of the negotiation, they exerted their utmost endeavours to prevail with the Danish Sovereign to relinquish his right to these islands. He refused to do this; but, compelled by the low state of his finances, and induced by the strong desire that he had for the Scottish alliance, he pledged them for the greater part of his daughter's portion.



After all the preliminary points had been adjusted, and both parties were agreed, this memorable treaty (under the name of a contract of marriage) was concluded, consisting of many articles, of which the following are the most important.

I. That the arrears of the *annual* of Norway should be remitted, with all its penalties, and no future payment should ever be exacted from the King, Queen, their heirs or their children.

II. That the princess's portion should amount to sixty thousand florins, of which ten thousand were to be paid previously to her leaving Denmark with the ambassadors; and for the remaining fifty, her royal father, with the advice and consent of the prelates, peers, and chiefs of his kingdom, assigned the islands of Orkney, as a pledge, to be retained till their redemption by himself or his successors.

III. That King James should, in case of his own death, secure to his Queen, Margaret, the possession of the palace of Linlithgow, and castle of Down in Monteith, with all their territories, and a revenue, besides, amounting to one third of the royal income.

IV. That if the Queen, in her widowhood, should choose to leave Scotland, she should, instead of this portion, accept of one hundred and twenty thousand florins, of which fifty thousand should be considered as paid on the restoration of Orkney to the Danish crown \*.

Matters were now settled; but, as the commotions which had formerly existed still continued to exhaust his resources, and Christian had no expectation of an immediate supply, he offered to pledge Shetland, as he had done Orkney, but for eight thousand florins only, while he paid the remaining two thousand, a sum equal to about twenty thousand pounds Sterling of our present money †. The terms were deemed reasonable; the offer was accepted; and, from that period, the islands of Orkney and Shetland formed a valuable gem in the Scottish crown.

\* *Vide* Appendix, No. VI.

† Mr. Pinkerton's History of Scotland.



## CHAP. V.

OF SOME MONUMENTS OF ANTIQUITY THAT ARE ASCRIBED TO THE SCANDI-  
NAVIANS, OR, AT LEAST, REFERRED TO THE PERIOD WHEN THEY POSSESS-  
ED THESE ISLANDS.

To the people that preceded the Norwegians, we have already ascribed the Picts-houses, single standing stones, and tumuli, which so often present themselves to view. Some of the latter kind were then purposely omitted, not so much on account of any peculiarity in their nature, as because they appear to be of a later date. We shall now consider them. The circumstance which distinguishes them from the former, is their being met with, not single, nor even several of them together, but in large groups. They are found in several places.

The island of Westray, in particular, contains, on the north and south-west sides of it, a great number of graves, scattered over two extensive plains, of that nature which are called *links*\* in Scotland. They have at first, perhaps, been covered by tumuli, or barrows, though of this there is no absolute certainty, as the ground on which they are, is composed entirely of sand, by the blowing of which the graves have been only of late discovered. They are formed either of stones of a moderate size, or of four larger ones on end, arranged in the form of a chest, to contain the body, and such other articles as the custom of the time interred with it. Few or no marks of burning are observable in these mansions of the dead, which are occupied mostly by bones, not of men only, but of several other animals. Warlike instruments, of the kind then in use, also make a part of their contents, among which may be reckoned battle-axes, two-handed swords, broad swords, helmets, swords made of the bone of a large fish, and also daggers. They have, besides, been found to contain instruments

I.  
Graves  
in  
Westray.

\* Sandy, flat ground, generally near the sea.



employed in the common purposes of life, as knives and combs; and others that have been used as ornaments, such as beads, broaches, and chains; together with some other articles, the use of which is now unknown. Of this last kind may be mentioned, a flat piece of marble, of a circular form, about two inches and a half in diameter; several stones, in shape and appearance like whetstones, that had never been used; and an iron vessel, resembling a helmet, only four inches and a half in the cavity, much damaged, as if with the stroke of a sharp weapon, such as an axe or a sword. In one of them was found a metal spoon, and a glass cup that contained two gills Scotch measure; and in another, a number of stones, formed into the shape and size of *whorles*\*, like those that were formerly used for spinning in Scotland.

That these are not ordinary places of interment, appears evident from the multitude of graves so widely scattered over the plains; which circumstance rather points them out as the scenes of so many hostile engagements. No record, however, that has reached us, nor even any tradition, points out when, or on what occasion, such fatal actions happened.

Many incursions, both from the Highlands and the Hæbudæ, were in ancient times made into these islands; and the most desperate valour shown in defending their property, as well as in seizing and carrying off the plunder. In some of these, perhaps, the inhabitants of the island might have assembled on these plains, to prevent the landing of their enemies; and, in consequence of a battle, such of the natives as had been killed, might have been buried on the fields, together with their favourite beasts or birds, their ornaments, and such other things as in life had shared their affection. This is rather a more probable supposition, than that these are the graves of such men as had intended an invasion of the island, and as soon as they landed, had been attacked by the people, and slaughtered on the spot, where they were immediately buried with their effects, as a memorial of their injustice and audacity. To this opinion there is a solid objection, arising from the manners of the age, and the custom of ene-

\* A round perforated piece of wood, put upon a spindle.



mies, who seldom or never bestow such attention on the interment of one another.

We have already mentioned the single standing stones as belonging to another period, and another people; their nature, form, size, and rude simplicity were pointed out, and a probable conjecture hazarded with regard to the purpose for which they were designed.

Strange as they may appear, they are not peculiar to this place: they are found in Scandinavia, from which perhaps the first inhabitants of this country originally came; and they are also sometimes found in Great Britain.

But those that are formed into figures of various sorts, especially circles and semicircles, are the most curious and remarkable; and it is truly astonishing that though they occur in different places, they have not, so far as we have learned, been taken notice of by any of the ancient writers. The reason perhaps is, that, as they bear evident marks of being Gothic monuments, they must be referred to a later age, when that people had spread themselves, in nations, tribes, and colonies, through most of the countries of the west of Europe\*. They have, indeed, been considered as Druidical temples,

\* We are sorry to be under a necessity of differing in opinion from our author, respecting the standing stones of Stennis, and other similar monuments. Had he recollected what he stated about the first inhabitants of Orkney having come over from Caithness, he must have been sensible that they were colonies of the Catti, or Catts, who still inhabit part of Caithness, and all Sutherland; and have done so from time immemorial. Now, these were, unquestionably, a Celtic tribe; and would bring with them, into Orkney, their Druidical institutions.

Similar circles, though varying in their dimensions, and particular circumstances, are found in all parts of the Highlands and Isles, from Arran to Caithness. Many have been demolished from mere wantonness, and the extension of agriculture has occasioned the demolition of many more. Sometimes there are only four standing stones, and these are always exactly in the four cardinal points, viewed from the center. Sometimes the subdivisions of direction are marked in the same circle. When the dimensions of the interior circle do not admit of this, sometimes there are a number of concentric circles, on which the minutest subdivisions are marked by stones, with great exactness. The central circle is sometimes occupied by a large tumulus of loose stones, on the top of which, a large stone seems to have served the purpose of an altar for sacrifices. Of this we have a striking example at Corrymony, in Inverness-shire, and other places. But, frequently, the altar of sacrifice is a stone of immense magnitude, and always due south from the center of the circles. Of this we have an example in the Clasmis, or standing stones on the banks of Loch Roag, in the island of Lewes. This monument has an avenue of about 100 paces in length, bounded on each side by tall stones, running from south to north, and a shorter avenue from east to west. A very large stone occupies the center, and the interior circle, which seems to have been a sort of *sanctum*  
*sanctorum*,



temples, according to a fashion which, for half a century past, has prevailed, to ascribe almost every monument of antiquity to that extraordinary order

*sanctorum*, is surrounded by very large stones. Several concentric circles extend to a considerable distance beyond this. A stone of most enormous magnitude is propped by other stones, on the northern declivity of a hill, and is seen from the center through the avenue of stones, to be exactly south. This seems to have been an altar, where they probably offered sacrifices when the sun was in the meridian.

In general, these stones were intended to represent the equatorial circle. But some of them have a smaller circle contiguous, which was intended to represent the ecliptic, or apparent path of the sun among the fixed stars.

We are perfectly satisfied that these circles were intended to serve the purpose of rude astronomical observatories, by which the priests could mark out the rising of the sun, moon, and stars; the seasons of the year; and even the hours, or divisions of the day. Where they are tolerably entire, they might serve these purposes at this day, to one who has bestowed a little attention on the positions of the stones.

The sun was the great object of Druidical veneration, as an emblem of the Deity; and to observe his apparent motions would be an object not merely of curiosity, but of piety.

The circle of Stennis is of very large dimensions, affording room to mark all the necessary subdivisions of direction, by stones in its periphery, without having recourse to concentric circles. Our author mentions mounds of earth on the east and west of this circle; but, he has forgotten to state, that it is entered by a gateway on the south, and on the north; and that the stones where he supposes sacrifices were offered, are seen through the gateway due south from the center of the circle. A sort of bridge, of loose stones, across the lake, forms a communication between the great circle, and the stones of sacrifice. On examining this great circle, we were strongly impressed with a belief that a sacred grove had once occupied its center.

These stones must evidently have been erected by a people who entertained the same religious ideas with those who constructed other similar circles, in various parts of the Highlands and Isles. That they preceded the arrival of the Scandinavians, appears very probable from our author's own account; for the stones where these people offered human victims to Odin, and worshipped their peculiar deities, were all in the North Isles: as if they thought their brutish divinities could not hear their prayers unless they were addressed from the nearest points to their native country.

It does not appear that the Scandinavians paid any particular veneration to the sun; though this was certainly the case among the ancient Gael, who were under the influence of the Druids. Persons learned in that language have assured us, that the Gaelic word for hell, or the place of punishment, originally meant a place of intense cold, from whence the sun's rays were excluded by thick mist and hoar frost: that the word for heaven, or place of happiness, means a green hill, enamelled with flowers, which enjoys uninterrupted sunshine. When the Highlanders pass a church, or other place esteemed holy, they always keep it on the right hand, and go round it in the course of the sun. A deviation from this practice would, in their apprehension, bring after it some dreadful disaster; such as the loss of cattle or sheep; or the culprit, or some of his friends, falling over a rock, and breaking their necks. When they launch their boats to proceed on a voyage, they first make a circular revolution, in the course of the sun, during which, they commonly ejaculate short prayers; and at the same time, they frequently cast their eyes towards the sun, or quarter where he may be, if obscured by clouds. Without this ceremony they do not expect a prosperous voyage, or a favourable fishing. In places frequented by strangers, these superstitions are laughed at, as much as the second sight. But in the numerous remote recesses of the Highlands and Isles, they



order of men. But had these been the authors of such monuments, history would not have been silent on the subject; which constantly mentions

they continue to be observed, though the people have lost all recollection that they were part of the ritual of the Druidical religion; in which the sun, if not regarded as God, was esteemed a most striking emblem of his power and beneficence. There some old women possess a traditionary acquaintance with the medicinal virtues of certain plants, with which, in certain cases, they work surprising cures. These they gather at sun-rise, when no person is within view of them, with a great many ceremonies, the principal of which consist in describing circles in the course of the sun, with their faces directed to that luminary; to whom, at the same time, they make frequent bows and genuflexions, and wave their hands, while they utter numerous ejaculations. They afterwards prepare the plants for use in an apartment from which every one is excluded, and use a great many similar ceremonies. The profane eye of obtrusive curiosity is supposed to mar the whole process; and they never ascribe the effects to the physical properties of the plants themselves: but to the exactness with which the ceremonies have been conducted. In vulgar Gaelic the name for a church is Clachan, stones; and going to church is expressed by a phrase which implies *going to the stones*: a clear proof that the first ideas of religious worship, among these people, were derived from the Druidical circles in question.

The Druids were judges and magistrates, as well as the priests and philosophers of the people: and their places of worship were, doubtless, also used as courts of justice, where their decisions might acquire double efficacy, while backed by the terrors of religion. There seems to be a striking resemblance between their tenets and institutions, and those of the Magi, the priests of Assyria, and other eastern nations. They cultivated astronomy, and other useful sciences, in their rude way. But, any knowledge they possessed, was carefully monopolized by their own fraternity. Upon the people they only inculcated ceremonies, and things they were to do, without daring to inquire why, or wherefore?—Even what remains of their medicinal ceremonies, are carefully concealed from public view. They are a sort of mason-word, which one old woman transmits to another, after a tedious noviciate, and solemn sanctions of concealment.

The Druidical worship was always practised in the open air; as they deemed no temple fit for the Deity, but the universe he had formed. Their places of worship are always embosomed either amidst rugged rocks, where the scenery inspires religious horror: or, they are situated, as at Stennis, where the sublime of Nature is gradually melted down, and combined with the beautiful. This is the most frequent position of their places of worship; and the surrounding scenery forcibly impresses the mind with an idea of a being at once powerful and beneficent. When the Druids had any villainy in view, such as reclaiming, or taking off, unfortunate individuals, who had incurred their displeasure; or whom they had accused of impiety; the business was managed in the impenetrable recesses of a forest, where circles within circles of trees were stained with blood; and armed men were ready to kill every person, whose impertinent curiosity led him to transgress the boundary.—The Roman writers are most grossly erroneous, when they mistake these groves for places of worship. They could not be places of worship, because none but the Druids, and their satellites, were admitted into them. They were objects of terror and dismay to all the people within their reach. Here the grim chief of the Druids might calculate on the profits arising from a rash expression, or some defect of ritual observance of a man, which put his life and property in the tyrant's power.

But if human victims were immolated at their places of worship, this must have been done with the consent and approbation of the whole people: and they must have fallen rather as victims to public justice, than as martyrs to what was deemed impiety.—E.



their having no temples whatever, and worshipping the Deity in groves only. Besides, had they been places of worship peculiar to that celebrated people, they would have naturally shared the same fate with themselves, and been razed to the foundation, as soon as the priests that had officiated in them were destroyed. That this had not been the case, is evident; for, in the south, as well as in the north, they remain still entire; and had they then existed, and had any connexion with that people, Tacitus, when he mentions the destruction of their groves, would not have failed to have taken some notice of them also\*. The very date of some of them in Scandinavia is moreover well known†; and the use of them pointed out by the writers of that country, who inform us, that they are denominated, in popular language, *tings*, or courts; and that they are places appropriated for the administration of justice, and the oblation of sacrifices. ‘A judicial circle stands there, where men were doomed to sacrifice.’—‘There Thord der Galler erected a court for one quarter, by the consent of all the men of that quarter‡.’ These circles and femicircles, therefore, or the stones erected into these forms, are to be considered as intended to serve the double purpose of temples and courts of justice, or places for assembling large bodies of people for various ends; and they are plainly to be ascribed to those nations that were of Gothic origin. Though their form is similar, they are very different in their dimensions, according to the purpose for which they were designed. In the largest class we may certainly rank Stonehenge in England, which is unquestionably the most superb and magnificent object of the kind; and which, if it be not the burial place of the celebrated Saxon, as the name seems to import, might have been the place for the meeting of their national assembly, as they met in the open air§. To the same class may be referred that noble circle of Classemis in the Lewes||, which may have been a court-house, in which affairs of importance might have been transacted, relative to the interest of the community. Their kings and chiefs were also sometimes elected in these large circles; while the lesser ones were used as temples of the inferior gods, and not un-

\* Tacitus.

† Islands Landnama Bok.

‡ So Mr. Thorkelin told Mr. Pinkerton:

§ Tacitus.

|| Martin, Western Isles.

frequently









Drawn by J. Spence & Co. 1847

Printed by Robert Taylor

# Stenhouse, Orkney

Published by Longman, Hurst, Rees, & Orme, Paternoster Row, Oct. 1. 1847.









Drawn by J. G. Scott del.

Engr. by J. G. Scott del.

# *Stones of Menhouse, Orkney. No. 80*



frequently as family burying places \*. It might have been naturally expected, that some such objects would have existed here, as the country had been so long occupied by the same people, who had erected and used them in other places. And, accordingly, in many places are seen small circles, but without stones around them now, whatever might have been formerly; and the islands possess also their Classemis, and even their Stonehenge, which, though often visited, and sometimes described, is still but little known.

The Mainland, toward the west, is intersected from south to north, to the distance of nearly five miles, by the loch of Stennis, which, near the middle, is almost divided into two, by the plains on each side stretching out, and nearly meeting with each other. These plains are pleasantly situated in the bosom of the loch, and in the centre of an immense amphitheatre, in the area of which are the parishes of Stennis, Harra, and Birsa. Its limits are the hills of Orphir, Rendal, and Sandwick, and the majestic hills of Hoy, which, toward the south, lie at a much greater distance, and bound the prospect. That on the west side of the loch contains a circle sixty fathoms in diameter, formed by a ditch on the outside, twenty feet broad and twelve deep; and on the inside, by a range of standing stones, twelve or fourteen feet high, and four broad; several of them are fallen down, of others fragments remain, and of some only the holes in which they stood. The earth that has been taken from the ditch has been carried away, and very probably been made use of to form four tumuli, or barrows, of considerable magnitude, which are ranked in pairs on the east and west side of this remarkable monument of antiquity.

II.  
Stones of  
Stennis.

The plain on the east border of the loch exhibits a semicircle, sixteen fathoms in diameter, formed not, like the circle, with a ditch, but by a mound of earth, and with stones in the inside, like the former in shape, though of much larger dimensions. Near the circle, there are standing stones that seem to be placed in no regular order that we can now discern; and as near the semicircle are others of the same description. In one of the latter is a round hole, not in the middle, but towards one of the edges,

\* Wormus, Olaus Magnus, and Dalberg Suecia ant. & hod.



much worn, as if by the friction of a rope or chain, by which some animal had been bound. Toward the centre of the semicircle, too, is a very large broad stone now lying on the ground; but whether it stood formerly like those around it, or has been raised and supported on pillars to serve a particular purpose, we shall not take upon us to determine.

These extraordinary monuments have, like almost all others of the same nature, been supposed Druidical; but with very little reason, since there is not the least shadow of evidence that that order of men was ever within these islands. Even the Celts, of whom they were the priests, and of whom they had the entire and absolute direction, never seem to have had any footing here, as is demonstrable from the names of men and places, and the ancient language, as well as from the manners and customs of the people, being all of them Pictish, Gothic, or Danish.

To the same people, therefore, from whom are derived all things else respecting this country, these monuments must also belong.

The purposes to which objects of that nature were applied in the countries from which Orkney received its inhabitants, will lead us to the use of those which we have now described. Like monuments of the same kind, they, it is highly probable, have been designed for a head court of law, or the convention of a popular assembly, for enacting salutary regulations; and, upon great and solemn occasions, for a temple to Odin, the Scandinavian god. For the combined and important ends of law and religion, no spot could have been devised more convenient in its situation. Not far distant from the middle of the Mainland, which is itself in the centre of the islands, at nearly an equal distance from Birsá, where the princes and earls used to reside, and Kirkwall, which had long been considered as the capital; Stennis is within a mile of the bay of Frith, to which boats from the North Isles have ready access; and still nearer to the bay of Kairston, in which boats land from the South Isles with equal facility. Before any civil business commenced in these conventions, sacrifices would be performed; and the perforated stone that stands near the semicircle, might have served for fastening the victim, while that near its centre was probably made use of as an altar for the immolation.



At Applecross, in the west of Ross-shire, are standing stones similar to these; some of which are formed into a circle, and others into a triangle, with one in the midst of them, perforated in the same manner. Very near them, too, are tumuli, or mounds of earth, such as those mentioned near the stones of Stennis. Another of these circles, composed of stones of the same nature, and in the same circumstances, stands in a moor, near Beaul, in Inverness-shire.

The weights of this country, as they are very ancient, and of a foreign origin, entirely different from those used in any other part of the kingdom, claim our attention in this chapter. Besides the laws, magistrates, and language, which the inhabitants retained at the cession of these islands to the crown of Scotland, they had also the misfortune to retain their weights, which are in their nature imperfect, and still more so from the strange manner in which they are commonly used. III.  
Weights.

These, together, with the weighing instruments, were imported from Norway, where they are mentioned at a very early period, and are still in general use\*.

The smallest of these weights, or the one of the lowest denomination, is the *mark*. Twenty-four marks make a setteen or lispund, or pund byfmer, or span†; all of which are equivalent and convertible terms; and though the three latter are now obsolete, they were commonly used in the last age; six setteens, or lispunds, make a meil, and twenty-four meils a last.

The weighing instruments, which are of the same extraction, are the byfmer and pundler; on the former of which are reckoned marks and setteens, or lispunds; and, on the latter, setteens and meils. Page 104

The *byfmer* is a lever or beam made of wood, about three feet long; and from one end to near the middle, it is a cylinder of about three inches diameter, thence it gently tapers to the other end, which is not above one inch in diameter. From the middle, all along this smallest end, it is marked with small iron pins at unequal distances, which serve to point out the weight, from one mark to twenty-four, or a lispund. The body to be

\* Torf. Hist. Norweig.

† Idem.



weighed is hung by a hook in the small end of the instrument, which is then suspended horizontally by a cord around it, held in the hand of the weigher, who shifts it towards the one end or the other, till the article he is weighing equiponderates with the large end, which serves it as a counterpoise; and when they are *in equilibrio*, the pin nearest the cord points out in marks the weight of the subject weighed.

The *pundler* is a beam about seven feet long, and between three and four inches diameter, somewhat of a cylindrical form, or rather approaching to that of a square, with the corners taken off; and is so exactly similar to the *statera Romana*, or steelyard, as to supersede the necessity of any farther description.

There are two of these instruments in use; the one for weighing bear or bigg, and the other malt; and hence they are denominated the bear and malt pundlers. The former, though constructed on the same principle, and in the same form with the latter, is one third less in its weight; every meil and setteën being but two thirds of the same denomination on the malt pundler; which is therefore considered as the standard of the bear pundler, and on this account the latter is seldom used.

The pundler is the instrument employed for weighing malt, meal, bear, oats, and other gross and weighty commodities; while the bysmer is made use of for ascertaining the weight of butter, oil, salt, wool; cheese, and other articles, which are divided into smaller parts, to serve the various purposes of retail in the country.

So intricate are these weights, and such is the uncertainty that attends them, that even the natives, who use them daily, are far from being agreed what should be the exact weight of each denomination. Some contend that the mark, which is the radical weight of which all the rest are multiples, and should weigh eighteen ounces; while others assert, that it should weigh two-and-twenty. But the most just, as well as the most common opinion is, that it ought to be equivalent to twenty-two ounces; and of consequence, the setteën, or lispund, should contain thirty pounds, and the meil eleven stones four pounds, Amsterdam weight.

No weights can long remain just, unless there be some fixed and acknowledged standards, to which occasional application may be made, in



case of any real or supposed deviation. The original standards of those in question have been long since lost or destroyed; and those that have been introduced in their room are said to be very different; and, instead of being fixed by any certain rule, they are fluctuating, and in a great measure arbitrary.

But, what is more extraordinary, a setteen, or lispund, on the bysmer, is different from a setteen on the pundler; and all the marks on the former, and the setteens on the latter, are entirely different from one another. This occasions some particular weights on each of these instruments to be most advantageous to the seller, as others are to the buyer; and this being known only to those who are much in the practice of weighing, not only strangers, but also the bulk of the people are unable to guard themselves against imposition.

Even those who are most intimately acquainted with the nature of these instruments find inconveniences arising from the use of them; for, on the bysmer, the least deviation from a mark cannot be less than ten ounces; nor can the same deviation from any one setteen on the pundler be less than eight pounds; and, what is worse, a certain dexterity in those who are accustomed to weigh much, will create the same, if not a greater difference, without any possible remedy\*.

Such imperfect instruments, and such a mode of using them, sanctioned in a great measure by custom, must, it is evident, have a pernicious influence on the condition of the people; not only as occasionally hurting their interest, but, what is of more deplorable consequence, sapping the founda-

\* On examining these instruments, it is obvious to remark, that being suspended on a cord, which is their pivot, or centre of motion, the centre of gravity is considerably above this when the lever is in a horizontal position. The centre of gravity may be considered as the point where the whole weight of the lever is accumulated; and when the lever is inclined from a horizontal position, this weight acts at the end of a lever, to counterpoise the subject weighed; and it will require a great addition of weight, beyond what is just, to bring back the instrument to a horizontal position. This source of error must be multiplied by the difference of the distance between the weight, and the subject weighed, from the pivot or centre of motion. Hence a man who has acquired dexterity in the use of these levers, may cheat to an incalculable amount, without the possibility of detection. After the fair amount of the subject weighed, is suspended to the short end of the lever, he has only to give it a slight inclination to the opposite side; and it will require a very great addition to bring back the lever to a horizontal position.

If any abuse ever called for legislative interference, surely this is one.—E.



tion of their moral principles. Those who have occasion to use them most, are in general tenants at will, with little stock, whose poverty and dependance stamp a low cunning on their character, which discovers itself on many occasions; and, from men of that description, resistance can scarcely be expected to the temptation of procuring an immediate advantage from the iniquity of their weights, especially as the detection is difficult; and if it should take place, the difference in the weight may be attributed to superior skill, or greater exactness.

But these weights are not only imperfect in themselves, and open a wide door to fraud in the use of them; they are also said to have departed from what they were originally, and, in the lapse of ages, increased to a much greater magnitude. The people of every rank murmur against them as unjust, and ill calculated to serve the purpose for which they were intended; and yet a few, who either derived or expected to derive an advantage from them, have not been ashamed to profess themselves their advocates, and have even gone so far as to oppose some attempts that have been made to ascertain their amount, or have them converted into the ordinary weights of the kingdom. Had the whole of the inhabitants been unanimous in their endeavours to get rid of them, they would long before this time have been set aside.

Little more than half a century ago, the Earl of Galloway, at the head of a number of gentlemen here, who were in no very friendly terms with the Earl of Morton, then grantee of the Crown rents in Orkney, entered into a resolution, from a conviction of the increase of these weights, to apply for redress to the law of their country. For this purpose, they industriously collected information from every quarter; and, first, by withholding the payment of their feu-duties, and afterwards bringing an action before the competent court, they involved his Lordship in a lawsuit. During the course of the action, they pleaded in excuse for their retaining the feu-duties, the unjust and extravagant increase of the weights made use of to ascertain their quantity; and declared their willingness to pay what they were bound to do, provided no more was exacted than would have been, had the weights been of the same standard they were when the islands were ceded to the Crown of Scotland. They contended, and with truth,



truth, that the laws, language, manners, customs, and particularly the weights, were derived from Norway; and that, if a standard of them were any where to be found, it was most likely to be in that country. To ascertain the truth as to this point, application was made, through the British Consul, to the Burgomaster at Bergen, Superintendant in chief of the Police, and Conservator of the standards of the weights and measures of that kingdom, who transmitted a certificate, containing the most ample and satisfactory information. In this paper he assures them, that, from the earliest times, the mark, which had always been considered as the radical weight, contained exactly eight ounces, or half a pound; the setteen, consisting of twenty-four marks, twelve pounds; and the meil, of consequence, seventy-two pounds. Having gained this intelligence, which they considered justly as of importance, they imagined themselves intitled to infer, that the weights in Orkney were the same as in Norway at the time the islands ceased to be dependent on that country.

They had evidence, or supposed they had, that the origin of the increase could be traced to the avaricious and oppressive spirit of Robert Stewart, Earl of Orkney; that these weights had received a farther augmentation during the despotic reign of his son Patrick; that the farmers of the Crown rents, subsequent to the time of these Earls, had discovered little inclination to relinquish their interest, so far as to restore matters to their ancient state; and that they had increased considerably even since the Morton family had come into possession. To the extravagant height to which they had arrived, they ascribed the state of the islands at that period, which they represented as poor in comparison of what they had been in former times; that for want of the means of industry, trade was in a languishing state, fisheries were almost entirely neglected, and agriculture was nearly in the same condition. Many estates, on which large families had lived with comfort, were now fallen into the hands of the superior; the proprietors were not above one third of the number they were eighty or ninety years before; and even the general population was greatly diminished.

In opposition to these arguments, the Earl and his friends insisted, that these islands, when let in farm, which they had been for a number of years,



years, yielded a greater rent to the Crown than at that time arose out of them to the Earl; and that, in particular, the rental of 1600 exceeded what was then the present one by eleven thousand merks, converting both into money at the same price; which certainly could not have been the case on the supposition of augmented weights. To this they added, that, when the islands were ceded to Scotland, they had become the patrimony of the Crown, and had been feued out at the full rental; and, therefore, the present proprietors had no just cause to complain, since their feu-duties were the effects of nothing else but those tenures which they had derived from their ancestors. They urged still farther, that standards or models of the weights had been kept, beyond the memory of man, by the Magistrates of Kirkwall; that no complaint had been made of their increase since the Union, when the grant was made in the Earl's favour; that the weights used by the Earl's servants were the same with those made use of over all the islands, and no heavier than those by which the landlords themselves received their rents in kind from their tenants; and that, though it were admitted that they had increased formerly, prescription could now be pleaded in their favour.

These, and such like arguments were advanced, at great length, by the contending parties with much laborious ingenuity; after which, the Court, having considered the cause, decreed in favour of the Earl of Morton, to the great disappointment and regret of the proprietors of Orkney.

## IV.

The ancient  
laws, courts,  
&c.

Before the islands came under the sovereignty of Scotland, the inhabitants used not only the weights of Norway, but spoke the language, were governed by the laws, and adhered to the customs of that kingdom, in the same manner as the people of Iceland and Ferroe do at this time. Even after they had changed their masters, they did not, in this respect, change their condition; for the monarch who had mortgaged them with reluctance, and intended soon to redeem them, sensible of the confusion that would result from the adoption of a new political system, had taken care to have it inserted as an article in the treaty, that they should retain their own senate, laws, magistrates, and all their customs, as formerly, when under his dominion\*. The same book of the law which they had anciently,

\* Buchan. Hist. Scot.

and



and which was the same with that of the mother country, and in many respects different from that of Scotland\*, was accordingly for many years retained, as also that celebrated Supreme Court, in which business of the utmost importance was transacted, and which was † denominated *Lawting* in the language of the country. In that noted Court was the investigation made that issued in the production of the diploma which has been preserved by Lord Sinclair and Dr. Reid, and already often quoted as an unquestionable authority ‡.

That it continued long after the transference, is evident from a grant of 1587. these isles by James the Sixth, with the consent of his Council, to the Lord Chancellor of Scotland and the Lord Justice-Clerk, with power of holding and adjourning courts called *Lawtings*. To Robert Stewart, the first Earl of Orkney of that name, the same powers were granted, two years afterwards, to hold and adjourn assemblies of the same kind. But, in the turbulent times that succeeded, during the oppressive administration of his son, the book of the law seems to have been destroyed or lost, and few or no *Lawtings* were convoked for public business. The farmers of the Crown rents who succeeded these Earls, and who seem to have had similar powers, found themselves in want of a system of rules for the administration of justice; and therefore revived the *Lawting*, in which they began to frame laws for themselves. This Court, and the practice of making by-laws in it, adapted to the circumstances and situation of the country, continued till the time of the Commonwealth, when they were entirely abolished.

The President, or principal person in the *Lawting*, was named the *Great Foud* or *Lagman*, and subordinate to him were several little fouds or under sheriffs or bailiffs; and, as the chief Judge had a council consisting of several members called *Raddmen* or Counsellors, so the inferior ones had their council also, composed of members denominated *Lagraetmen* or *Law-wrightmen*, who were a kind of constables for the execution of justice in their respective islands. To these members seem to have been added, at

\* Torfæi Orcades.

† Torfæi Orcades.

‡ Wallace, *vide* Appendix, No. I.



least latterly, the governors for the time, the gentlemen of the county, and even perhaps sometimes the peasants, who among a free people, had a vote in framing the laws that were to govern them.

The acts they passed, which are known under the name of County Acts, discover much regard to the prosperity of the place, inasmuch as they tend to preserve peace, and promote loyalty and religion. Many of the regulations which they contain are of the greatest importance to the police; such as the hiring of servants, and their engagements with their masters; the tending of cattle; the keeping in due repair their garden walls, and other fences.

But while these legislators enacted penalties against instances of fraud, injustice, and idleness, and rewards for the opposite virtues, they discovered mistaken notions of trade, in as far as they attempted to confine the sale of the productions of the place to particular times and particular places. They erred also in their endeavours to fix the price of the articles, which nothing but the demand can ever regulate justly; nor did they discover more wisdom in their attempts to fix the rate of wages, which can only be regulated by the same cause.

As these acts throw some light on the internal state of the country, with respect to industry, knowledge, customs, and manners, they are brought to public view as an object at least of curiosity \*. For a long time they produced many beneficial effects; and their becoming obsolete, for want of execution and other causes, has been of much detriment to the islands, which have since been defective in many articles of police, as the former customs and regulations have lost their efficacy, and those of the kingdom to which they are subject are neither so much relished nor so well understood.

V.  
Ancient  
Holdings.

Tenures, in general, are a feudal institution, and were known only in the countries into which the feudal system was introduced. They are said, however strange it may appear, not to have been known in Norway; and only began to make their appearance in this place about the time of the Reformation. Previously to that æra, the lands here, like those in the

\* *Vide* Appendix, No. IX.



eastern countries, seem to have acknowledged no superior, nor to have been held by any tenure, but were called *odal* or *udal* lands; the characteristic of which is, that they are subject to no feudal service, nor held of any superior. This term *odal* or *udal*, which is well known in France, Germany, and England, as well as in Norway, is said to be compounded of two Gothic words, the one of which signifies property, and the other ancient \*; so that, in this acceptation, *odal* or *udal* lands are of the same import with an ancient inheritance, patrimony, or possession. The holders of these lands, or, what is the same thing, the proprietors of them were of all men reckoned the most honourable. Hence, the frequent mention that is made, not only in the celebrated Danish historian †, and in the noted deduction so often quoted ‡, but even in the elegant Latin historian of Scotland, of the *Proceres Orcadium* §, or the nobles of Orkney. This appellation, however, could not have been bestowed on all the proprietors of this description, who seem to have been very numerous, but was probably confined principally to the Earls, their relations and connexions, who held their lands in this manner.

From a comparison between the laws by which this udal property was inherited, sold, redeemed, or transmitted from one person to another, and some of the Mosaical institutions mentioned in Scripture, some have imagined that the former were derived from the latter; and indeed it must be confessed that there are between them many striking points of resemblance.

These udal or allodial lands are directly opposed to fees or feus, which are always subject to a rental or feu-duty to a superior, to which the other never were, but only paid tithe, which appears to have been exacted from almost all lands whatever; and *scat*, which in the language of the mother country, is said to signify tribute, land-tax, or ground-subsidy. That this tax, either by itself, or in conjunction with others, might be more equitably laid on, and more easily collected, a plan was probably adopted, similar to that which was followed in order to reduce the lands to *keidage*,

\* Euardus ad leges Salicas, in voce *Authunica*.

† Wallace's Diploma.

§ Buchanan.

† Torsæi Orcades, et Hist. Nor.



in Doomſday-Book, in England. In that ancient record, the entries of land are firſt by counties, then by towns or manors, and laſtly, by hides, half hides, and virgates of land. In like manner, here, the entries are firſt by iſlands and pariſhes, then by towns and villages, and laſtly by marklands, erſlands or ouncelands, pennylands, and farthinglands; and theſe diviſions were obſerved, in order to fix and limit this tax, which is ſuppoſed to have been paid to the Crown for protection. In almoſt every farm or piece of land within the precincts of theſe iſlands, this ancient duty is ſtill paid, and for the moſt part, in money; while the other duties are paid in kind; ſuch as meal, malt, butter, oil, and ſeveral other articles which are productions of the country. Even the udal lands were not exempted from the payment of *ſcat*, any more than they were from the payment of tithes, though they were evidently exempted from all others.

The ſame cauſes, however, that in other places have contributed to convert allodial lands into ſuch as are held by tenure, have operated here as forcibly, and have even been combined with others which are peculiar; and, by theſe, the great number of udallers that ſeem to have been here formerly, are much reduced at preſent. They are ſtill diminifhing, and their eſtates are ſmall in proportion; ſo that, in the courſe of a few generations, if the ſame cauſes continue to operate, there is reaſon to conclude, that this kind of tenure will nowhere be found.

As the men who now occupy ſuch lands diſcover little ſkill in agriculture, and as little induſtry, which their rude little farms but too plainly demonſtrate, there will be no great cauſe to regret the probability of their little properties being incorporated with the larger eſtates around them. Neither are there any perſons of note, any more than of extenſive property, to be found at preſent among that claſs of proprietors; as all of that deſcription have long ſince relinquished their ancient feudal rights, and hold their lands by the ſame tenures as thoſe of the ſame rank in other parts of the kingdom.

Moſt of the lands here are now held in feu; which, as appears from the date of the charters, they began to be, ſome time after the Reformation; and theſe feus were granted, ſome of them by the Crown, ſome by the earls, and others by the biſhops of Orkney. The feu-duties, in many of  
them,



them, are extremely high; perhaps the same with the old rental; and this is not to be wondered at, in the case of churchmen, who could not feu on lower terms, without a manifest detriment to their successors.

The ancient language of a country, from whatever source derived, forms an important article in its history; and that of this place, as it has long since ceased to be spoken, claims our notice, under this head, as an object of antiquity.

VI.  
Language.

The most ancient inhabitants of Europe, were the Celts; the Iberi, who were Mauri or Moors that had come from Africa, and possessed themselves of Aquitania and Spain; the Sarmatæ, who seem to have inhabited the south-west of Tartary; and the Goths, who, in process of time, spread themselves over the greatest part of Europe.

These races of men are pointed out as distinct by ancient writers; and the languages which are still spoken in various countries can easily be adduced to support their authority. In confirmation of this, it may be observed, that the Celtic, or at least dialects of it, is still spoken in a great part of Ireland, in the Highlands of Scotland, Wales, and Brittany in France. The Iberian still survives in the Mauritanic: the Sarmatian is the same with the Slavonic, which prevails over an immense tract of country towards the east; and the Gothic exists in Germany, Scandinavia, and in the numerous branches that sprung from them, and are scattered over the northern regions\*.

From the Gothic this country received its language; and this is equally true, whether we consider that spoken by the original inhabitants, or that of the people who mingled with them, and by whom the islands were so long possessed †. Though it was called *Norse*, it seems to have been a different dialect from that spoken in either Denmark, Sweden, Norway, or even in Iceland. To the last of these it has plainly a nearer affinity than to the others; though it differs in some degree even from it; but whether this difference be the effect of chance and time, to which every tongue is liable, or whether it may be owing to a mixture of the old Pictish language,

\* Mr. Pinkerton's Introduction.

† Sir R. Sibbald's Hist. of Fife.



preserved in this remote corner, are questions that admit of no easy determination.

Such as it was, it seems to have continued a length of time in great purity even after the islands ceased to be connected with Norway, as we find it mentioned as the language generally spoken in the sixteenth century \*. So late as the middle, or even towards the end of the seventeenth century, though it had lost much ground, it still continued to be spoken in four parishes in the Mainland, particularly at home in their own houses, by the people who, when they came abroad, seemed to have joined in conversation with others that spoke the language of the country to which they had been joined †.

For many years past it has been almost entirely forgotten, except in one parish in the heart of the Mainland, where the people are said, till of late, to have retained some acquaintance with it ‡. In Shetland it continued much longer; for within these thirty years, there were some people in Fula, and even perhaps in other places, who not only recollected words, such as the names of things, but could repeat many stanzas, if not whole poems, in that language §. Here it now exists only in a few vulgar and obsolete words, and in the names of men and places. The English names of persons, which are common, are evidently derived from the descendants of Cromwell's soldiers, many of whom were left here.

Many of the inhabitants that now exist are descended from the earls, bishops, and inferior clergy, who, in general, were natives of Scotland; and still more from those that attended them hither, in the capacity of servants or companions; and this numerous progeny bear the names which their ancestors imported from the place of their nativity. Hence the Sinclairs, the Stewarts, the Balfours, the Grahams, the Honymans, and the Traills; most of whom either have been, or are at present, men of extensive landed

\* Ben. MSS. † Mr. Mackaile.

‡ So late as 1756 or 1757, as a respectable native of this country was travelling from Kirkwall to Birfa, he had occasion to lodge all night in a house in Harra; where, to his surprise, he heard two old men, for an hour or more, converse together in an unknown tongue; which, on inquiry, he found was the Norse language.

§ Low's Tour. Vide Appendix, No. X.

property;



property ; and the Kents, Kings, Folfetters, the Hepburns, and the Mafons, who are now, in general, men of much lower rank, and of inferior condition.

But a great many names here seem to be old, and, so far as can be discovered, appear distinct and peculiar, and were, without doubt, significant in the ancient language of the country. Some of these are local ; some are evidently derived from particular trades or professions ; while others appear to have been taken from the particular spots where those that bore them had their first abode, or acquired their first permanent property. Of the first kind are the Mainlands, the Waes's, the Roufays, the Swaney's, the Rendals, the Deerneffes, and the Holms ; whose names are plainly adopted from the islands and parishes in which they had their habitation. The second kind, namely those that are derived from different professions, (to say nothing of such as Smith, Taylor, Wright, Mason, and so on, which are common to this with most other places), are the Keldies, descended perhaps from the primitive priests or monks, and the Papleys, that have sprung from the same order of men, under different circumstances. The furnames of Hourstane, Corstane, and Birstane, are very common here ; as also that of Scater ; which are all said to be derived from the Gothic language ; in which the former implies the superlative degree of comparison, and the latter, not an idol worshipped in Germany, as has been asserted \*, but a meadow fitted for, and applied to pasturage †.

The name of Baikie has the same origin, and implies a small running water ‡ ; which might perhaps have been taken from some rivulet, on the banks of which they that first bore it had fixed their abode, or acquired their property. Many names, besides these, are the offspring, perhaps, of similar circumstances, which we are now unable to trace.

The oldest furnames here are the Feas, the Scollays, the Baikies, the Loutits, the Tullochs, the Torfs, the Marcus's the Hacros, the Garriochs, the Harolds, the Holmes, the Keldies, and the Papleys ; which, together with those local names already mentioned, may all be considered as derived from the ancient language. To the same source may be traced many of

\* Wallace.

† Pontoppidan's Nat. Hist. of Norway.

‡ Ihre ; Vivus.



the names of places, a few of which only we shall mention, for the sake of example.

Skael is the name of a place that occurs very frequently, and implies a situation on the seaside, exposed much to the noise of the billows\*; Sandwich, situated in a sandy bay; Rackwick, near a place where sea wrack, or weed, is thrown in with impetuosity †. There are few names more frequently met with than that of Burgh, which signifies a fortification ‡; and Bugar, the enclosure within which such a fort is situated; or, more properly, both united together. Gorn is a very common name, and signifies that a place is situated in the midst of a field tolerably well-cultivated, and of considerable extent and fertility; Gaith §, a small patch of enclosed cultivated ground, with waste land around it; Cleat, a house in a conspicuous point of view; Holland, an abode on high land; How, an habitation on elevated ground, or on a hill with a gentle declivity ||.

VII.  
Ancient  
Coins.

In a valley, formed by the hill of Wideford on the one side, and those of Orphir on the other, there is a deep marsh, of considerable extent, which has frequently supplied the inhabitants of Kirkwall with fuel. The name of the little estate of which it forms a part, together with the proprietor's house, situated in its vicinity, is Caldale; which lies at nearly an equal distance from the bay of Frith, the bay of Scapa, and the burgh of Kirkwall.

As a man was digging peat here, he discovered two *horns*, much the same both in form and size with those of our cattle at present, in an inclined position, nearly two feet under the surface, with a firm, hard, dry kind of black earth, both above and around them. The widest parts of these horns were uppermost; on and near which were found several pieces of fine silver, in the form of crescents, or *fibulae*, differing from one another a good deal both in figure and dimensions. Some of them were flat, others angled; some round, some nearly met at the ends; others were wider at the extremities; one resembled in shape the staple of a door, and another a hook for hanging clothes upon.

\* Ihre; Skäl, Sonus. † Idem; Wick, Sinus. ‡ Idem. § Ihre. || Idem.



The horns themselves, from their own nature and that of the earth in which they have been buried, had resisted putrefaction so much, that they were almost entire, and contained coins to the number of three hundred. In the bottom, or smallest end of one of these horns, were discovered some bits of apparently coarser silver, which, though they exhibited marks of being cut with an instrument, were manifestly the parts of crescents, or *fibulæ*, of the same kind with those already described.

The whole of this valuable ancient treasure was carefully concealed, and was partly given away, before the proprietor of the land was made acquainted with the discovery. Had he received it at first, and in the entire state in which it was found, he judiciously intended to have submitted it to the inspection of antiquarians and men of science, by sending some of the coins and other articles, with the circumstances of the discovery, to the British museum, and transmitting the rest to the different universities throughout the kingdom. Thus might some light have been thrown on the state of the arts at that period, and even some points in the history of the islands might have received illustration.

An account of it, however, that was published in the Edinburgh newspapers soon after its discovery, attracted the attention of a celebrated English antiquary, who anxiously collected as many of the coins as he could, which, having accurately examined them at his leisure, he found to be coins of Canute the Great, consisting of forty-two varieties as to their place of coinage in England. That gentleman, sensible of the importance of such an acquisition, soon after published a catalogue of them, together with such coins of the same prince as had been formerly known, and engraved a plate containing the Caldale coins, with one of the horns that contained them, and two of the *fibulæ*, or crescents.

There still remain some monuments of antiquity, which, though of less importance, cannot be passed over in silence, as they are sometimes the subject of conversation, in consequence of their being mentioned by former writers. Of this sort are some of those venerable buildings, which formerly were very lofty and magnificent, but are now levelled to the ground. So completely are several of them now in ruins, that we in vain search for the place on which they stood. The bishop's palace in Eglisay, the house of

VIII.  
Ancient  
Buildings.



Sigurd of Westness, that of Swein in Gairfay, the castle of Damsey, the abode of Thorkel in Sandwick, the noted palaces of the princes and bishops in Birfa, and the palace of the earls in Orphir, are utterly destroyed. Most, if not the whole of these, however, were perhaps built of wood. To those, whose existence was once certain, though scarcely any vestige of them is now to be seen, may be added one, that is perhaps ideal, and never would have been heard of, had it not been for the strangeness of the name.

Camp of  
Justice.

Scarcely two miles to the north-east of Westness, in the island of Rousay, in an angle formed by two hills facing the north-west, rises a ridge or mound, of considerable height and length, with a very large moat or ditch on each side of it, formed by the motion of the water rushing impetuously down the declivity. The whole is evidently a production of nature, as no marks of art, on the most accurate inspection, can be discovered on it; and the name of the Camp of Jupiter Fring, which it bears, is the only circumstance that has brought it into notice, or made it remarkable. It has borne this extraordinary appellation for a long time; but it is not known by whom, or on what occasion, it was bestowed on it. It has for many years past been the favourite haunt of a pair of large eagles, which are known to have frequented the same spot for ages; and the circumstance of its being chosen for that purpose by the bird sacred to the king of the gods, might have furnished some whimsical person with the first hint for calling this eminence the Camp of Jupiter Fring, *Ferrens*, or the Striker.

Castle of  
Coppirow.

In the small island of Wier, and near its centre, on a fine green hillock, which has a commanding view of the adjacent islands, is situated the castle of Coppirow, or Cubbirow, which, in the ancient language, we are told, signifies a tower of defence against external violence\*. The building is a square, fifteen feet on the side, the walls seven feet thick, constructed of large stones strongly connected with lime; and this uncommon strength, together with the ditches and ramparts around it, shows plainly that it was intended as a fortification. An Orkney gentleman, about the middle of the twelfth century, erected it in that form; and it afterwards stood a siege of some months, and after all was not taken†. His name was Kolbem

\* Wallace.

† Torfæi Orcades.



Hranga, a man of great note, and of a family much connected with the islands; and the name which the castle bears is so similar in point of sound to that of the founder, that we need trace it to no other derivation. The fort was reckoned a place of much security, and, on the whole, may serve to convince us how vast the difference is between what was, in that age, considered as a place of strength, and what is viewed in the same light at present.

Christ's-Church, in Birsá, was once very famous, and is of very great antiquity; but whether it was the present place of worship that was distinguished by that name, or the chapel in the burgh, the Bergishered of early times, we are in want of evidence sufficient to determine. That the last is that sacred edifice, is most probable, from its being, till of late, an object of such veneration to the people, that they often made vows, and offered oblations in it, as they also did in another chapel in Deerness, the two extremities of the Mainland. Though the seat of the bishops was first here, there is no remaining vestige of their palace, unless it stood on the site, and was incorporated with that reared by the Sinclairs, which is now in ruins.

Even the town of Kirkwall itself bears strong marks of considerable antiquity. In confirmation of this, it may be observed, that the streets are very narrow, and by no means either straight, or of the same breadth throughout. The houses, instead of fronting the streets, are built with their ends to them; the roofs are very high and steep; the doors and windows are small in proportion to the size of the building; and the rooms in some of them are ill lighted, small and irregular. This, however, is the case only with those that have stood very long, or are very old; especially those on the shore, or its vicinity; for such as have been rebuilt, and particularly the new ones, are in every respect different from these, and are as beautiful and commodious as those of the towns in other parts of the kingdom.

But whatever antiquity this town itself may plead, it certainly contains some old buildings, two of them nearly in ruins, and one pretty entire, which, under this head, merit some consideration.



Castle of  
Kirkwall.

The first of these we shall mention, is that ruin, well known by the name of the King's Castle; which appellation it probably received, from its having been the ordinary residence of the royal governors, chamberlains, or farmers of the islands, subsequently to their annexation to the crown of Scotland. This fortress, situated on the west side of the principal street, and nearly fronting the cathedral of St. Magnus, seems to have been a place of great strength, if we may judge from its extent, the thickness of its walls, and the almost impenetrable nature of its cement. The arms and mitre, engraved on a stone on its front, have led to the supposition of its having been erected by some of the prelates of this see\*; but, if ever they had a palace on its site, it must have been early, and previously to its erection, which took place in the fourteenth century, by Henry Sinclair, the first of that name that was Earl of Orkney†. This ancient fortress, Patrick Earl of Orkney, after he had been three years in confinement, commanded his natural son to regain possession of, which, at the head of a considerable force, he accordingly did, and defended it for some time with determined valour. But he was at length overpowered by the King's troops, supported by artillery advantageously placed, when the castle was reduced and almost demolished, and he himself surrendered, on the condition that no torture should be employed to extort from him a confession of his father's guilt‡.

Bishop's  
Palace.

1263. Towards the east side of the town, and almost on a line with the cathedral, from which it is not far distant, stands that ancient ruin, known by the name of the Bishop's Palace. As early as the middle of the thirteenth century, it seems to have been a place of consequence, as it then accommodated, in one of its upper stories, the celebrated Haco King of Norway, with his courtiers and servants, after his return from his last expedition.

As this palace was evidently built at different times, it now exhibits a motley mixture of various sorts of architecture, and is extensive rather than regular.

\* Wallace.

† Torfæi Orcades.

‡ Mr. Laing's History of Scotland.

Towards





*Palace of the Bishop of Exeter & Cathedral of St. Magnus at Exeter.*

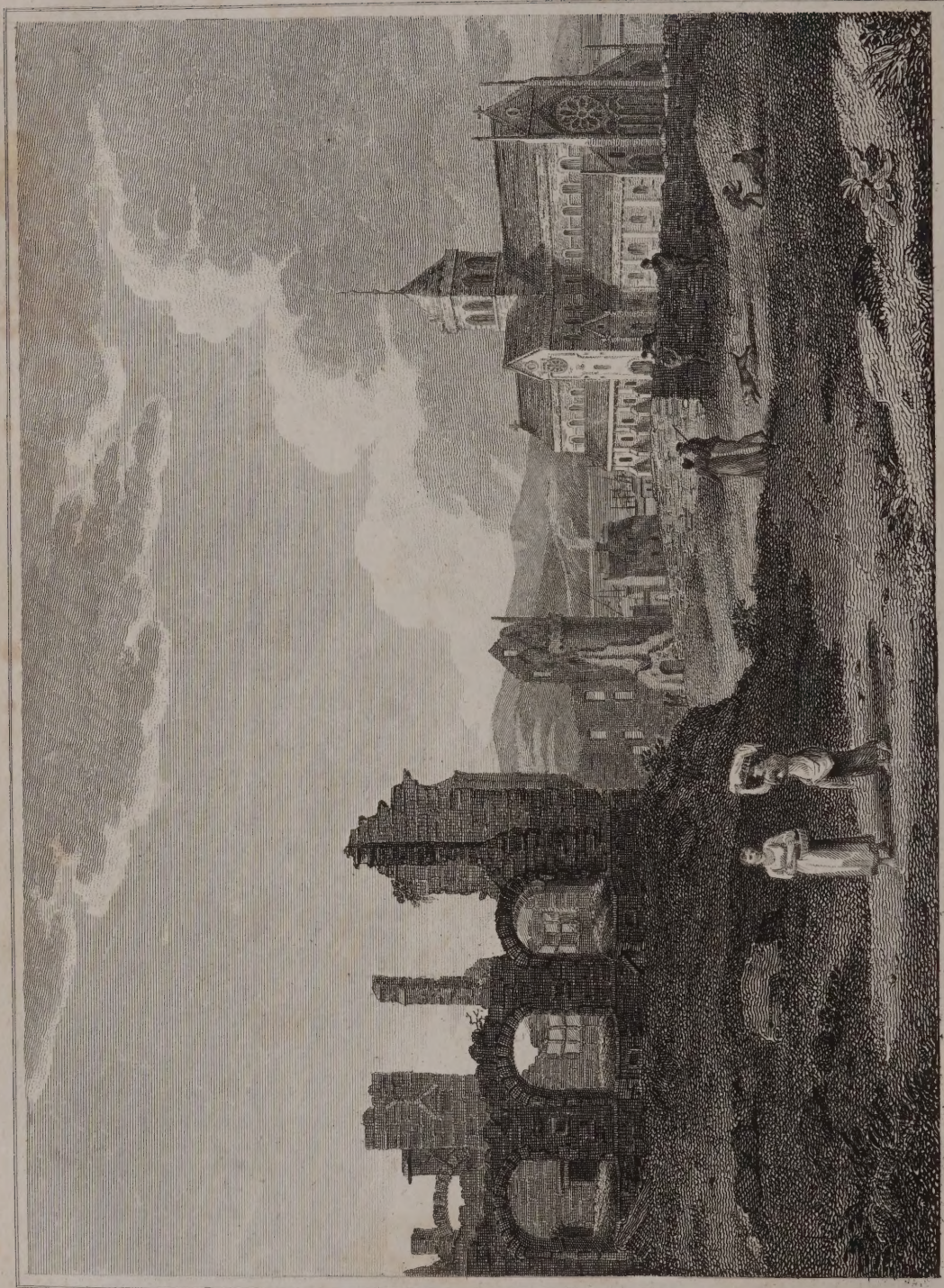












Drawn by A. Spotswood Esq.

Engr. by R. Scott Esq.

*Cathedral of St. Magnus, & Ruins of the Bishops Palace Kirkwall, Orkney.*



Towards the north-east corner of the building, and near the church, stood a square tower, called the Mafs, or Menfe Tower, which, from the style of the structure, as well as from its very decayed state, appears to have been of the greatest antiquity. Almost close to it, there was another, nearly of the same form, but of smaller dimensions, which seems to have been rebuilt, if not entirely erected, by Bishop Reid, as there were, on several parts of it, the initials of his name cut, on stone, above his mitre and arms.

The large round tower, which, with these, forms a triangle, was entirely a work of his, as a rude statue of him, still standing in a niche in the south wall, demonstrates; and these three towers bounded the northern extremity of the structure, which stretched southwards, with a breadth of little more than twenty feet, while its length in that direction was not less than a hundred. The walls were high, and formerly may have been much higher, strongly built of grey stone, and the doors and windows of red free-stone; the latter of which are some of them small, some large, some high, some low, and are very different in their forms as well as in their dimensions. In short, this spacious fabric, reared perhaps in early times, and since often repaired and altered, has great appearance of irregularity, and is so fast hastening into decay, that, in the course of not many years, there will be scarcely so much of it left, as to mark the place of its foundation.

Amidst not only these, but all the other buildings of this place, the Cathedral of St. Magnus raises its majestic head, to strike the eye, and excite the admiration of every stranger. It was raised by the superstition of the dark ages, on the same model with those that are so often met with in other parts of the kingdom. Compared, indeed, with the magnificent ruins of the Abbey of Melrose, with the Cathedral of Durham, or the unparalleled Yorkminster, its grandeur and beauty suffer much. But if the time in which it was built be considered, the people by whom, and the place where it was situated, together with several other circumstances, it will strike us with wonder, as a performance that shows equal boldness in the design, and pious industry in the execution.

Ronald,



1138. Ronald, Count of Orkney, some time before the middle of the twelfth century, founded it in honour of his uncle St. Magnus, to whom it was dedicated. Dr. Stewart, a reverend prelate in the time of James the Fourth, added three pillars to the east end of it, with a fine Gothic window, which, for beauty, is far superior to any other in the building; and Dr. Reid, another prelate, in the reign of the unfortunate Mary, added as many to the west end, which, on account of his death, perhaps, were never finished, and are therefore, in point of elegance, not only inferior to the former, but to those in the rest of the structure.

As to its dimensions, the body of the building stretches, in a line from east to west, two hundred and thirty-six feet; its breadth through that extent amounts to fifty-six; the arms of the cross are thirty feet long and thirty-three broad; the height of the main roof is seventy-one feet; and, from the level of the floor to the summit of the steeple, is nearly a hundred and forty. The roof, which is vaulted with a number of Gothic arches, is supported by twenty-eight pillars, fourteen on each side, besides four of uncommon strength and beauty, that serve to support the spire; and while the rest of the pillars are only fifteen feet, these are twenty-four, in circumference.

The present spire, however, is low and paltry, being built in the room of one that was burnt or struck down with lightning, which, in all probability, was of such a large size, as to require pillars of that solidity to support it. It contains an excellent chime of bells, which are said to have been a donation from Bishop Maxwell.

The east window, which, in point of size and symmetry, excels all the rest, is twelve feet broad and thirty-six in height, including one at the top, which was called *a rose window*, twelve feet in diameter. In the south arm of the cross there is another rose window, of the same dimensions; and, in the west end of the church, there is a third window, constructed on the model of that on the east end, but far inferior to it, both in size and proportion.

In short, though built at different times, and by different persons, this cathedral must be admitted to be an edifice not only grand and simple, but also wonderfully regular.

Fortunate



Fortunate in its remote situation, and in the disposition of the people, it escaped the intemperate rage of the reformers, who rased to the foundation many a noble structure of the same kind, and remains entire to this day, a monument of the exalted ideas of the illustrious founder, and the superb ornament of these islands.

Much care and expence have been bestowed for preserving it in that state; and without the most judicious and faithful management of the scanty fund allotted for that purpose, it must, long ere now, have fallen into ruins. To support it, neither the Town-Council, nor the heritors of the country parish, have ever, in these capacities, contributed any thing, though it is the only established place of worship which they are bound to maintain; but the burthen has, from time immemorial, been laid on the Kirk-session, who, in this respect, have discharged the trust reposed in them, in such a manner as to reflect the highest honour on their integrity. Since the abolition of Episcopacy, the money arising from the Crown rents here, has been sometimes considerable; and as it has been annually paid into the Exchequer, applications have frequently been made, but in vain, to procure something from that fund, to support that venerable fabric.



## CHAP. VI.

OF THE ISLANDS AFTER THEY BECAME SUBJECT TO ANOTHER SOVEREIGN;  
THE MANY CHANGES THAT THEY UNDERWENT; AND THE INFLUENCE  
WHICH THESE SEEM MANIFESTLY TO HAVE HAD, IN RETARDING THEIR  
IMPROVEMENT.

THE islands ought never to have been separated from the kingdom of Scotland; and the only title that Denmark could produce to them, was founded originally in maritime usurpation. This, however, did not prevent that court from frequently claiming them, in virtue of the right of redemption; but that claim, which, on its first revival, would have admitted of dispute, has now lain dormant for upwards of a hundred and thirty years.

From the treaty, by which they were united to the country to which nature intended they should belong, many advantages resulted to Scotland, which, by that means, acquired both a considerable extent of territory, and the best fishing ground in her dominions, and, what was preferable to both, a multitude of sober loyal subjects, among whom could be raised, at pleasure, a number of the best sailors in the world. But whether the islands were improved by this change, or whether the advantages were equal and reciprocal, is a question that admits not of such an easy and obvious solution. The respectable nobleman who was then Earl of Orkney, seems to have regarded it in the light of a benefit; for he appears to have been active and zealous, and to have left no method untried to accomplish this new connexion. Besides any public motives he might have had for his conduct, his own interest plainly led him to forward the measure, which must have been desirable to him, who, confined at home in the discharge of the duties of his high office, as well as in the management of his own estate, had no doubt experienced the inconvenience of holding an extensive property in a distant province, subject to a foreign prince. Moreover, in  
the



the event of a war breaking out between the two kingdoms, he must have foreseen the difficulty of acting in such a manner as to preserve his fidelity to both Sovereigns, and the risk he ran, if he leaned more to the one side than the other, of losing his property and honours. But, whatever were his motives in forwarding the transaction, or whatever benefits he expected to reap from it, he, soon after its accomplishment, resigned the earldom.

The homage and sovereignty only had been claimed by the Kings of Norway; and these could be conveyed to the Scottish Monarch only in the recent deed of impignoration. The Earl, therefore, after the cession, enjoyed, as in justice he ought, every right, privilege, emolument, and property, which he had done under the former government. Dissatisfied, however, with some circumstances in these islands, and expecting to obtain lands in place of them, in a more convenient situation, and wishing, at the same time, to raise to the earldom of Caithness his son by his second wife, grand-daughter to the Earl of Sutherland, in preference to his son by his first wife, a daughter of James Earl of Douglas, he resigned his estate into the hands of his Sovereign, who soon afterwards granted him lands in compensation. These were the castle of Ravenscraig, and lands adjacent, in recompense, according to our author, for his castle of Kirkwall, '*and his baill richt*' of the earldom of Orkney\*.

1470.

Several other lucrative grants were made at the same time, accompanied with an engagement, that no revocation as to them should take place, even though the King should happen to be a minor. To these were added, ample discharges from the Kings both of Denmark and Scotland, and all claims whatever that any or both of them might have against him, in consequence of his having possessed the earldom. He was, moreover, permitted to receive his rents in the way which he considered most proper, without any sort of molestation; and full liberty was granted him to reside in whatever country he pleased, with the sole exception of England.

King James, in virtue of this transaction with the Earl, and that with the King of Denmark, which he had formerly concluded, had now acquired a complete right to the earldom, which he discovered a manifest

\* Scotstarvet.



inclination to convert to the benefit of the islands, by annexing them to the Crown by Act of Parliament, not to be given away in time coming to  
 1471. any, except one of the King's sons, born in lawful wedlock \*.

Though this shows pretty plainly their importance in the eyes of the Scottish nation, there is another circumstance that sets this matter in a still stronger point of light. This was the precaution which James, with the advice of his Council, took to solicit the Church to sanction, by her authority, his right to the lands, which, in security of his Queen's portion, he had lately obtained.

For this end, the Archbishop of St. Andrews, and Primate of all Scotland, was dispatched with instructions to Rome, 'to impetrate and desire of our Holy Fader the Pope a confirmation of the conventions, confederations and bands, maid betwixt our Sovereign Lord and the King of Denmark that last decessit, of the donation and impignoration of the lands of Orkney and Shetland †.'

That all this care, and these precautions, in regard to his new acquisition, might not be in vain, he had no sooner perfected his title by all the means in his power, than he turned his attention to the internal state of the country; erected Kirkwall into a royal burgh; promoted the advantage of the inhabitants, and both secured and extended the rights of the udallers and freeholders. For the remainder of his reign, the unhappy differences that arose between him and his nobles, and the turbulent state of the kingdom, diverted his attention from the Islands, which were committed to lieutenants or viceroys, who acted under his commission in the administration of justice, and in collecting the rents for his benefit.

During this period, the church was ruled by prelates of great character. To Thomas de Tulloch, who has already appeared, in several instances, in a very conspicuous point of view, succeeded William, who was witness to a deed, dated the 15th day of April 1448; and if there be not a vacancy in the see about this time ‡, which seems rather probable, must have discharged the duties of that sacred office for at least twenty years. His successor in that dignity was William Tulloch, cousin to Bishop Thomas of  
 1468.

\* Act of Parliament. Haddington's Coll.

† Register of Parliament.

‡ Keith's Catalogue.



the same name. So high did he stand in his Sovereign's esteem, that he granted him a commission, along with other illustrious persons, to negotiate a marriage between him and the Princess Margaret, daughter of the King of Norway. In this office, which was certainly of great trust and importance, he seems to have conducted himself so much to the satisfaction of his Prince, that, in the space of three years afterwards, he was appointed one of the Administrators of Exchequer, and soon afterwards made Lord Privy Seal, and employed in an embassy to England \*. From this see he was translated to Murray †. The name of Tulloch, which he and his relation bore, is very ancient, and is said to have been derived from an Earl of Orkney, denominated Harold the Holy, of which it is supposed a corruption. His talents were respectable, not only as a divine, but also as a man of business and an author, as appears from a manuscript which he is said to have left, in which is traced, with much accuracy, the genealogy of the royal families of Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Scotland, England, and Normandy ‡.

Previously to this period, the church here had been under the jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Drontheim, who had the nomination of the Bishops, who were his suffragans. It now changed masters, was ranked in the province, and became subject to the sway of the Archbishop of St. Andrews in Scotland.

The Chapter then consisted of canons, a dean, a chanter, a provost, and a treasurer, with some assistant priests.

Immediately after Bishop Tulloch's translation, Andrew was appointed to the see, and he seems to have occupied the same place in the royal favour. In proof of this, it may be observed, that in his time, and very probably by his means, Kirkwall had its first charter, erecting it into a royal burgh, with all such rights, privileges and immunities, as were granted to other towns in the kingdom. He was a person of such consequence, as to obtain from Henry the Seventh of England, letters of safe-conduct for himself and twelve persons in his retinue, for the purpose of travelling through that country. 1478. 1486.

\* Rymer's Fœd.

† Spottiswoode.

‡ Richard Aug. Hay.



1511. To him succeeded Edward Stewart, a man of an illustrious birth, and, what was of more consequence, of an excellent character. His taste and his generosity are evinced by his enlarging the cathedral of St. Magnus with the addition of some beautiful pillars and arches towards the east end; in which there is an elegant window, in the same style, form, and proportions, though inferior in point of size, with that which has been so much and so justly admired, in Yorkminster in England. He had for a successor, in the Episcopal dignity, Thomas Bishop of Orkney, whose only action of note was the donation which he made for maintaining the quirksters in his cathedral.

Though the Sinclair family had voluntarily resigned the earldom, and had received full value in substantial landed property, they seem to have still looked with a wishful eye toward their former possessions. Accordingly, in the subsequent reign, Lord Sinclair found means to be appointed one of the commissioner's for collecting the King's rents in Orkney and 1489. Shetland \*. Some years afterwards, they advanced a step farther towards 1501. the object at which they aimed, by obtaining a lease of the earldom for a period of nineteen years; and for the very insignificant rent of six hundred and fifty pounds Scots money. Dissatisfied with this advantage, which even to them, opulent as they were, must have been an object of some moment, they seem to have lost sight, for a little, of both justice and gratitude; as they made a bold, though unsuccessful attempt to regain the entire possession.

To understand this, it must be remembered, that William Sinclair, son of the last Earl of Orkney by his second marriage, had been, as appears from the charter, created, according to his father's wish, Earl of Caithness; and Henry Sinclair, son of William, his eldest son by a first marriage, had been declared the head of his family, and, moreover, created Lord Sinclair; yet the son of this nobleman concurred with George Earl of Caithness, grandson of William, in whose favour the earldom had been resigned, in attempting to invade and forcibly seize the Orkney Islands.

\* Unprinted Acts of Parliament.



Availing themselves of the relaxed state of the reins of government, during the minority of James the Fifth, to execute their ambitious designs, they collected a very considerable military force, which they embarked for this place, with the most sanguine hopes of victory. Here, however, they met with a more warm reception than they expected; for the brave islanders, under the command of Sir James Sinclair, a natural son of the same family, then governor of the castle of Kirkwall, attacked them on the confines of the parish of Stennis; routed them completely at a place called Bigswell, in the vale of Summerdale; slew the Earl, with five hundred of his followers; and took Lord Sinclair and all the rest of them prisoners \*. 1527.

To this day the field of battle, though there is nothing in its appearance relative to this event, is well known; and, in the adjacent marsh, through which, it is alleged, the Earl's troops were pursued, previously to the action, dead bodies have very lately been found, with their clothes in a wonderful state of preservation, occasioned, no doubt, by the antiseptic nature of the earth in which they had lain.

In vindication of their conduct as to this matter, which was certainly inconsistent with their general character, however much in unison with the turbulent state of the kingdom, and the still barbarous manners of the age, it may be observed, that there is some ground for supposing that Lord Sinclair came over with a commission to supersede Sir James in the government; and that the disaster that befel him and his noble relation, who had come to support him, was owing to the opposition that he met with from this powerful and popular leader. This appears from a paper lately found in the family, which contains a complaint against Sir James, that was either made, or intended to have been made, to his Majesty on that subject. But this, perhaps, ought not to be credited, were it not corroborated by a respite for the term of nineteen years, granted to Sinclair of Stroma, and thirty others, for the murder of the Earl of Caithness; and to this document there can be no objection †, as it contains every mark of authenticity. But, whatever was the cause of this melancholy adventure, about two years after it happened, the young King, or, more properly, those that then

\* Hollinshed's Hist. of Scotland. Ben. MSS. Wallace.

† Vide Appendix No II.



1530. were at the helm of government, saw the absolute necessity of reducing the islands to order; and were, of consequence, more easily induced to dissolve the annexation, though conceived in very strict terms, and grant the islands in feu to James Earl of Murray, the King's natural brother, and his heirs-male; with a clause of reversion to the Crown, in case of their failure \*. Great as his power and influence were, however, he did not long enjoy this benefaction; for the grant, which had been made without due consideration, was, in the space of a few years, revoked, as detrimental to the public interest; and Orkney and Shetland were again annexed to the Crown, by a firm and formal act, framed for the purpose †.

In the mean time, Sir James Sinclair, elated with the success that he had obtained in the rencounter with the Earl of Caithness and his friends, trusting to his own popularity, and depending on the influence of his connexions at Court, solicited from his sovereign the islands of Sanday and Eday; and obtained them on a false representation that they were of little value, being only holms fit for pasturing domestic animals.

As soon as the King was apprised of the truth, justly offended at the gross manner in which he had been imposed on, he threatened the Baronet with vengeance; who, afraid to meet his Sovereign, from whom he expected not only punishment, but disgrace, is said to have thrown himself into a deep pit, communicating with the sea, that forms the entrance to the noble harbour of Deersound. So much had he conciliated the affections of the people, by his humane attention to their interests, and so strange were the circumstances of his death believed to be, that it has been perpetuated by tradition as a recent event; and the place where it is thought to have happened, is still pointed out under the name of the Gloup of Linkness.

The unhappy fate of this, in many respects, deserving man, combined with the influence of his friends, softened the resentment of the King so much, that he granted to his widow a right to his whole estate, moveable and immoveable, that, on account of his suicide, had been confiscated ‡.

The

\* Great Seal Register.

† Ibid.

‡ A letter made to Barbara Stewart, relict of umquhile James Sinclair of Sanday, Knight, her airis and assignees, of the gift of all guides, moveable and immoveable, &c. which pertained to the said



The disturbances that arose here before and about this period, induced King James the Fifth to visit these remote islands. This young monarch had now, with the vigour of youth, and the wisdom of years, amidst many difficulties, and even imminent hazard to his person, established internal tranquillity in his kingdom; and, in pursuance of his patriotic views, had conceived the laudable design of visiting the remotest parts of his dominions. His intention was to administer justice, to check commotion, and to make the inestimable benefits of order, law, and civilization be not only known, but relished, among those who were the farthest removed from the seat of government.

In entering upon the execution of this benevolent plan, obstacles of a domestic and delicate nature occurred, that created delay, which were no sooner removed, than the squadron, that had been for some time in readiness, failed down the Forth. The fleet soon doubled the bold and rocky heights of Caithness; and, crossing the Frith, displayed the royal standard to the natives of the Orkney Isles. Here, by only a small exertion of his authority, he soon composed all the disturbances, and took some of the most factious into custody; and, after having had the friths and bays surveyed, and charts of them taken by his pilot, the Prince took his departure, and bent his course to the west, in the farther prosecution of his voyage. While he was in Kirkwall, he lodged in the Episcopal palace, and was royally entertained by the Bishop; and so well pleased was he with the inhabitants in general, who seem to have vied with each other in paying him every mark of submission, respect, and honour, that, as soon as he arrived at the capital, he confirmed the town's charter, and, not long afterwards, granted a respite of nineteen years to Edward Sinclair of Stroma, with thirty of his accomplices, for the slaughter of the Earl of Caithness \*. 1536.

Having died a few years afterwards of a broken heart, the government 1542. of the kingdom devolved on the Earl of Arran, as regent, who conferred the islands on the Earl of Huntly, by whom they were enjoyed for the

said umquhile James, and now pertain to our Sovereign Lord be reason of escheat, because the said umquhile James wilfully slew himself at Stirling, the eighteenth day of April A. D. fifteen hundred and thirty-nine years.—*Privy-Seal Register*.

• *Vide Appendix No. II.*

space



space of thirteen years, till Mary, the young Queen, became of age to choose her guardians, when they, together with other exorbitant grants of that period, were resumed \*. Nevertheless, this imprudent, though amiable Princess was prevailed on, before she was of age, to make a new grant of them to her natural brother, Lord Robert Stewart, and his heirs-male, 1565. with reversion to the Crown in case they failed †.

Two years afterwards, when this grant was revoked, the Queen conferred them on James Hepburn, Earl of Bothwell, with the title of Duke of Orkney, in consequence of her resolution to marry him ‡. His complicated crimes soon afterwards caused them to be forfeited; when they again reverted to the Crown; and, for some years, the rents were collected by order of the State, and paid annually into the treasury. The interest in them, however, that he had acquired, in virtue of the beneficence of his royal mistress, was perhaps the reason for his attempting to land here in the depth of his misfortunes; and he would have effected his purpose, had his force not been repelled by Gilbert Balfour, then governor of the castle of Kirkwall. §.

In the mean time, the church was ruled by several eminent prelates. To Edward Stewart (whose excellent character and beneficent actions we 1525. have already mentioned), succeeded Robert Maxwell, son of Sir John Maxwell of Pollock, who had been at first rector of Torbolton, afterwards provost of the collegiate church in the town of Dunbarton, and was at last promoted to the see of Orkney. As his predecessor had enlarged the dimensions, and added to the external beauty of the cathedral, so he ornamented it internally, by building in it stalls, which had curiously carved on them the arms of the former bishops, and many other devices. To this mark of respect for the church in which he performed divine service, he added another, in furnishing, at his own expence, an excellent chime of bells for the spire, of which it seems formerly to have been in a great measure destitute.

\* Black Acts. Leslie, Hist. Scot.

† Great Seal Register.

‡ Ibid. Buchan. Spottiswoode, Hist. Scot.

§ Anderson's Hist. of Scotland MS. Adv. Lib. Edin.



His courtly manners, his elegant address, and the sumptuous entertainments which he furnished, seem to have been gratifying to his royal patron, when he graced his palace with his presence; for, on his return home, he embraced the earliest occasion to bestow several benefactions on the country.

Respectable, however, as this prelate was, and celebrated as he appears to have been, on account of his splendid munificence, his successor excelled him in every respect, and arrived at a much higher degree of celebrity.

This was Robert Reid, son to John Reid of Aikenhead, who, with many 1540. others, fell in the fatal field of Flouden. His mother was Elizabeth Shanwell, sister to John, abbot of Coupar, and Robert, vicar of Kirkaldy, who was appointed one of the first judges of the College of Justice after its institution.

He was born at Aikenhead; educated at St. Salvator's college in St. Andrews; was first subdean, then official, or commissary, of Murray; afterwards nominated abbot of Kinloss: he obtained the priory of Beaulieu *in commendam*, and was at last raised to the see of Orkney. Besides these offices, which he bore with equal credit to himself, and advantage to the church, of which he was a member, he acted for some time as vicar-general in the management of the diocese of Aberdeen, under the commission of the bishop of that see, who was then in a foreign country.

Five years after his preferment, he was appointed one of the ordinary judges; and when he had faithfully discharged the duties of that office for the space of nine years, he was nominated president of the Court of Session. These honours, civil and ecclesiastical, which were heaped on him with a liberal hand, he appears to have justly merited, by his talents and his virtues.

His generosity was displayed, not only in erecting the round and square towers, that terminated the north end of the bishop's palace, but in extending and decorating the cathedral of St. Magnus. To the west end of it he made a considerable addition, by the erection of three pillars, and built the magnificent porch which serves it for an entry.

He conceived the design of building a college in the immediate vicinity of it, for the instruction of youth in grammar and philosophy; and both granted ground and built some part of a square, which he intended should serve



for that purpose. Besides these beneficent deeds, he made a new foundation of the chapter, by increasing the number of the canons, prebendaries, and other officers, and furnishing them with more ample provision for their maintenance. His knowledge extended to every branch of science and literature common in that age; and he was particularly acquainted with such branches as were connected with the sacred office, and with the laws, constitution, and political state of his own country. For that reason he possessed the confidence and favour of his Sovereign, who frequently employed him in business of the utmost importance. During several years, he was accordingly one of the auditors of Exchequer; he was appointed a commissioner on the part of Scotland for treating of a peace with the English; and, when it was thought expedient, in order to strengthen the connexion between the two countries, that the beautiful young Queen of Scots should be married to the Dauphin of France, this eminent prelate was made choice of as one of the commissioners to conduct her abroad, and witness her nuptials in that country.

In the execution of this important and honourable trust he was unfortunate; for the ship in which he sailed, and which had on board of her all the most valuable presents, was wrecked near Boulogne; and the Earl of Rothes, with the bishop, escaped in the boat, with much difficulty. While he was on his return home, after having executed the object of his mission, he was seized with a disorder, that ended his days, at Dieppe, to the loss as well as the regret of his countrymen.

By his will he left eight thousand merks, for the purpose of founding a college in Edinburgh, consisting of three schools; one for grammar, one for poetry and oratory, and one for civil and common law; and there is extant a decree that was obtained for that sum, against Walter, commendator of Kinlofs, at the instance of his Majesty's advocate\*.

The only writings which this prelate left, were, a geographical description of the Isles of Orkney, and a genealogical and historical account of the family of Sinclair; both of which were written at the desire of the King of Denmark, and were extant in manuscript in the last century †.

\* Haddington's Collections.

† Mackenzie's Lives.



His successor in the see was Adam Bothwell, the first reformed bishop of those Isles, son to Francis Bothwell, one of the senators of the College of Justice; whom Queen Mary presented to the office, after he had been duly elected by the chapter. He performed the marriage ceremony between her and Bothwell, and afterwards took part with her enemies. Two years after his presentation to the bishopric, he was appointed one of the Lords of Session, and for many years discharged the duties of that important office with much dignity. As his residence in his see, however, was thereby prevented, he exchanged the temporalities of his bishopric with Robert Stewart, Earl of Orkney, for his abbacy of Holyrood-house; and he is frequently styled abbot of that place, as well as bishop of Orkney. Notwithstanding his having joined the enemies of the queen, Mary seems still to have retained for him some degree of her former favour; for when her unfortunate circumstances compelled her to resign the crown, she granted a procuration to him, to inaugurate her son the young Prince, which was accordingly done at Stirling.

Previously to that, she had given him a proof of her esteem, in appointing him one of the commissioners for collecting the Scots laws into a body; and, partly to his faithful industry in the discharge of his trust, do we owe the first impression of our laws at Edinburgh, well known by the name of the Black Acts, from the circumstance of their being printed in the Saxon character. The same respect was, on another occasion, shown him by the nation; for when the unhappy differences took place between the young King and his mother, who was then a prisoner in England, he was chosen by the Estates to aid the Regent in bringing them to some termination.

After all, he seems to have been little more than a nominal bishop of Orkney, as the revenues were collected by the Earl, and, in consequence of the exchange, applied to his own use; and the spiritual function was discharged by a superintendant, who had so much of the episcopal power as to direct church censures, and ordain ministers, as in other places. The man that bore this office, which, in that age of zeal, was adopted as a medium between presbytery and prelacy, was Mr. James Annan, minister of the churches of Sanday and Westray. This mode of church government expired with him.



The Islands had now, since their union with Scotland, and their annexation to that crown, been twice granted to needy or avaricious favourites, and as often, from motives of public expediency, resumed: they had continued, however, for some time past, in the hands of government, as royal domains, and the revenues that arose from them were converted to its benefit and use. An object of such importance, therefore, as they were at that time considered, was not likely to be long overlooked.

Lord Robert Stewart accordingly revived his claim; and, by means of that address for which he was distinguished, prevailed on his nephew, the young King of Scots, not only to confer on him the revenues, and renew  
 1580. the grant, but, by letters patent, to create him Earl of Orkney\*. By his conduct, however, he soon showed that he was undeserving the royal favour, and merited neither such profit nor such honours. Naturally proud, as well as ambitious, and far from being exempted from avarice, he availed himself of the remote situation of these parts, to commit many acts of violence and oppression, of which the people made many loud and bitter complaints; and when, to all this cruel treatment, he added the design of delivering the earldom into the hands of foreigners, he was immediately  
 1589. on the discovery, stripped of the possession. The King, justly offended at the ingratitude and disloyal conduct of his relation, next granted them to Sir John Maitland of Thirlstain, the Chancellor of Scotland, and to Sir Ludovick Ballantine, the Justice-Clerk, jointly; with the customs, tolls of ships, and other revenues; who, for reasons not mentioned, soon † afterwards restored the whole privileges and property to the Crown.

In the mean time, Robert Stewart, sensible of the many advantages that resulted from the valuable possessions which he had so recently lost, and no doubt regretting his own imprudent and criminal conduct, which had contributed to this effect, renewed his application to his young Sovereign, over whom address and exterior accomplishments had always but too much influence; and prevailed on him, notwithstanding all that had happened, to restore to him and his heirs-male those lands of which he had been deprived.

\* Great Seal Register.

† Ibid.



The same grant was renewed to him and his son Patrick; and, in the 1591. event of their dying without issue, to the Duke of Lenox; and an act of dissolution was obtained, which lasted only for the short space of one year; after which the islands of Orkney and Shetland were again annexed to the Crown\*.

Patrick Stewart, his son, however, had influence sufficient to procure a 1600. new grant in his own favour, and that of his male issue, and also of his three brothers; and in failure of them, to the Duke of Lenox †; and he was no sooner invested with the possession, than he gave such specimens of his conduct, as plainly discovered that he inherited his father's vices; and was, at least in so far as concerned his behaviour to the people, determined to tread in his steps. His only object seemed to be, to acquire wealth, to spend it in dissipation, to extend his power, and gratify his unbounded ambition. For accomplishing these ends, he made no scruple to act contrary to justice; and when the people murmured, they were treated with still greater severity, till they were at length so fortunate as to find means of making their complaints reach the royal ear; when he was thrown into prison, and, being afterwards convicted of high treason, suffered the punishment so justly due to his complicated crimes.

A contemporary author, who is generally esteemed, draws his character in just and striking terms:

‘ This nobleman (says he) having undone his estate by riot and prodigality, did seek by unlawful shifts to repair the same; making acts in his courts, and exacting penalties for the breach thereof. If any man was tried, to have concealed any thing that might infer a pecuniary mulct, and bring profit to the Earl, his lands and goods were declared confiscated. Or if any went forth of the Isles without his license, or his deputies, upon whatever occasion, they should forfeit their moveables. And (which of all his acts was the most inhumane) he ordained, that if any man was tried, to supply or give relief to ships, or any vessels distressed by tempest, the same shall be punished in his person, and fined at the Earl's pleasure ‡.’

\* A<sup>c</sup>t, Ja. VI. parl. 14.

† Great Seal Register.

‡ Spottiswoode's History of Scotland.



The condition of many thousand people, of which the inhabitants then consisted, under the government of a man of that description, must have been truly deplorable. Even after the annexation that took place on his condemnation and forfeiture, their minds were extremely troubled in recollecting the sufferings they had endured, and dreading those they might still meet with, if a man of a similar character should in future be invested with the same dangerous powers. To quiet their minds from any apprehensions they were under on this account, the King, with the advice of his Council, issued an order, ‘ charging officers at arms to pass to the ‘ market-cross of Kirkwall, and other places needful, within Orkney and ‘ Shetland; and there, by open proclamation, to give signification to all ‘ his Majesty’s lieges and subjects, that the lands and earldom of Orkney ‘ and Shetland were annexed to the Crown, to remain in time coming \*.’ The bishop, in the mean time, was appointed their governor, whom they were strictly enjoined to obey; and, at the same time, they were exhorted to give no ear to the idle reports which they ‘ had heard, of alterations and ‘ changes of the present estate of the said bounds, to the former condition ‘ of misrule, trouble, and oppression †.’

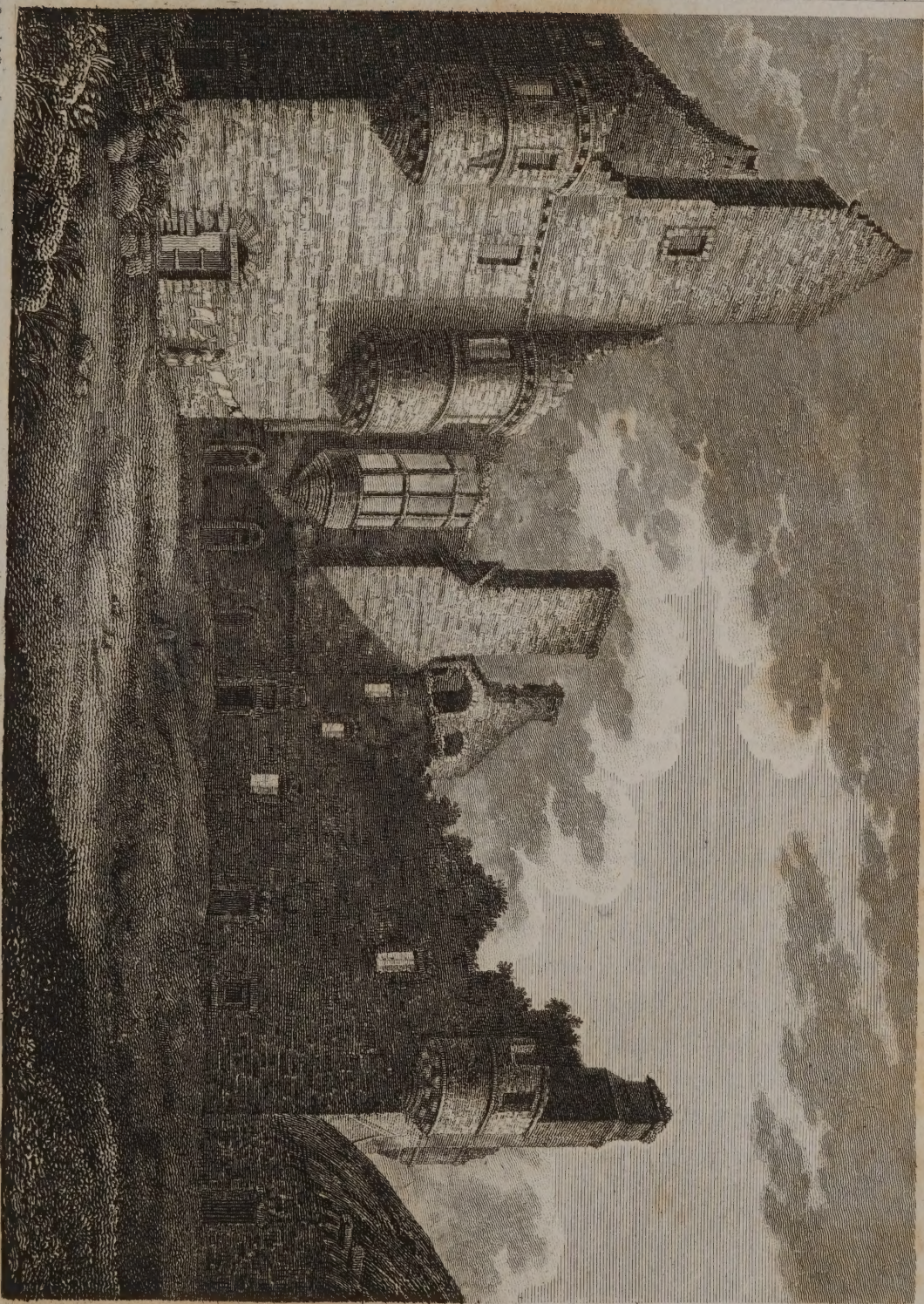
Such universal alarm and painful apprehensions, which required such attention on the part of government to allay, must have proceeded from an adequate cause, and will not permit us, however much inclined, to consider the accounts that have been given of the conduct of the Stewarts here, as exaggerated. Even the very castles which they were at such pains to erect, to show the extent of their power and wealth, are monuments of their pride and oppression.

To the ancient palace in Birsa, that had been built, or at least occupied by the Earls of Sinclair, Earl Robert Stewart, pleased with its site, added a magnificent front and colonnades, in the style of the palace of Falkland; and, on a stone over the principal gate, caused a Latin inscription to be put, in which he arrogated to himself the title of royalty. But though this might have arisen from a grammatical mistake, the same excuse cannot be pleaded for the arrogant motto that he assumed, which implied, that as

\* Privy Seal Register.

† Ibid.





Engraved by J. R. Smith

Printed by J. R. Smith

*Ruins of the Earl of Orkney's Palace.*







his family had been, so it was at present, and would remain in time coming \*. His conduct in building the castle of Birsa testified the same presumptuous disposition. In order to carry on the work with little expence to himself, and with expedition, he assailed the whole country in money, victuals, and personal services; and these, and other exactions which he made, pressed so hard on the poor inhabitants, that, as a just punishment of such unrighteous deeds, his memory is, even at this day, held in execration.

His son Patrick, whose disposition was similar, seems to have adopted the same tyrannical plan in building the castle of Scalloway in Shetland, where he compelled the inhabitants to work like slaves, and imposed a tax upon every sheep and ox through that country, which continues still to be paid under the name of the sheep and ox penny.

The same method was probably pursued in building the far more elegant structure of the Earl's palace in Kirkwall. It is an edifice reared by the same man in the pride of his power, as appears, not only from the date, but from there still being seen, on different parts of it, the letters P. E. O., the initials of his name and dignity. The lower or ground floor is divided into a great many vaults or cells, with small, narrow openings, to serve them in place of windows; and as they bear a striking resemblance to the dark and dismal abodes for felons in some prisons, there is some reason to believe that they have sometimes been employed as places of confinement, though their original destination might have been to hold stores and provisions. A well, neatly built with hewn stone, and supplied with water from the high ground to the eastward, still remains near the bottom of a fine stair, which, by three flights of steps, leads to the hall, which is equally spacious and magnificent. There are two chimnies in this hall, one in the side and another in the end of it. Its dimensions are fifty-eight feet long, twenty broad, and fourteen high; and it is lighted from the east and from the south, by three large Gothic windows. The walls are for the most part built of grey stone; and on some parts of them, especially on the corners, there are projections of cut free-stone, raised to a considerable

\* Sic fuit, est, et erit.



height in the form of turrets or bastions, the lower parts of which are divided into windows. The whole building, like others in that age, forms three sides of an oblong. It is only two stories high; and through every part, but more especially in the turrets and windows, more regard has been paid to variety than uniformity.

The castle of Noltland, in the island of Westray, is a structure that deserves some notice, though we have no certain information of either the time when, or the person by whom it was erected. This noble building, situated in a beautiful plain, covered with flowers and grass, at the bottom of a hill, and near the banks of a fine lake, commands an extensive prospect of the northern ocean, and the neighbouring isles; and though only a part of it remains standing, the whole fabric is very large; and as it is nearly in the same style with the former, it should, at least in its present form, perhaps be referred to the same age. The ground on which it stands was granted to Gilbert Balfour, who was master of the household to Queen Mary and her husband Lord Darnley, who had appointed him sheriff of Orkney and governor of the castle of Kirkwall; and these circumstances have given rise to the opinion, that this gentleman built the castle of Noltland in a hurry, and only finished a part of it, to serve as a secure place of retreat to the Queen, and her unhappy husband Bothwell, in their adversity. This opinion, however, is unfounded, as appears evident from the conduct of that gentleman in refusing Bothwell, in his distress, admission into the castle of Kirkwall, and still more so, from the castle being long before that time described, as it might be at present, a large unfinished building\*.

1614 The resolution of the Scottish government to keep the islands henceforth inseparably united to the Crown, though replete with wisdom and humanity, was unhappily but of short continuance; for the King, importuned by his friends, whom he was unwilling to disoblige, superseded the Bishop by a new grant of the country to Sir James Stewart of Kilsyth, afterwards Lord Ochiltree, not as it had been conferred on the Earls, but

\* Ben. MSS. Adv. Lib. Edin. Et est excellentissima arx sive castellum, sed nondum tamen adhuc completa.



in the capacity of a farmer-general \*. Like most men who have acted in that quality, he soon discovered the object that he had in view, and was as solicitous in the acquisition of wealth, as he was careless of the rights of humanity. Following the example of the Stewarts in several respects, and continuing the exorbitant exactions which they had begun, his government became so intolerable, that the inhabitants, not satisfied with unavailing murmurs and complaints, boldly prosecuted the exactor; and, having substantiated the charges against him to the conviction of his judges, he 1622. was deprived of his lease, on account of his oppression †.

In the space of only two years, they were again conveyed to Sir George Hay of Kinfauns, who was then Lord Chancellor, for a rent of forty thousand merks Scots; but after he had possessed them on these terms for three years, he resigned them into the hands of government.

Instead of disposing of them any longer in this mode, one somewhat different was adopted; and they were now let in lease for only the short period of two or three years, for a stipulated rent, to farmers. The condition of the people, however, seems to have been no better under these men, who, for their own emolument, violated their rights without mercy; and the heavy burthens which they already bore, and their dread of still greater, conspired to induce them to combine in petitioning the Legislature. The landholders accordingly united, and framed a petition, 'praying, that no man be interposed between his Majesty and them to molest them, but that they may remain his own immediate vassals.' Their representation and request were listened to with humane attention; when examined, were found reasonable; and finally attended with such success, that, in that very Parliament, an act was passed, ratifying and confirming 1633. all former annexations ‡.

They continued in this state, however, but a short time, as the rents were soon afterwards let in lease, on such terms as the Administration for the time deemed expedient, and which were higher or lower, according to the interest or loyalty of those that obtained them: but how far these needy or rapacious farmers regarded the rights of the people, will best appear from the popular discontents that were then so prevalent.

\* Privy Council Register.

† Idem.

‡ Act 10. Parl. 1. Ch. I.



But while they were thus passing frequently from hand to hand, and no person of consequence had any permanent interest to promote their improvement, the influence and importunity of a favourite courtier prevailed on the necessities of the Prince to deliver them into the hands of a new master.

Before we enter on the consideration of this transaction, we must look back to the affairs of the Church, which were intimately connected with those of the earldom.

While Bishop Bothwell lived, and the episcopal duty was performed by the Superintendant, no disputes whatever seem to have arisen respecting the revenues, which had been granted to the Earls in exchange for the 1606. abbacy. After his death, however, when Mr. James Law, minister of Kirkliston, was appointed to the see, the case was widely different. On his arrival in the north, with a view to commence the duties of his station, and reap the fruits of his benefice, the temporalities of his bishopric were withheld from him by Earl Patrick, under the pretence of the exchange that had been made between his father and the Bishop's official predecessor. No such plea, however, could in justice be admitted; for whatever transaction of that kind might have taken place, it could only exist during the lives of the contracting parties. But the Earl was a man of an impetuous spirit, overawed by no power, and restrained by no principle; and, treading in the steps of his father, had in the bishopric, as well as in the earldom, committed, without controul, many acts of injustice and unprovoked cruelty. Roused into indignation at the injuries which he saw his people daily endure, not less than at those which he himself had sustained, the Bishop marked down the complaints that had been brought him, encouraged the people to persist in their attempts to obtain justice, and directed their resentment with such wisdom and effect, as to bring him at last to condign punishment.

From the earliest ages, the lands of the bishopric and earldom of Orkney were so intermixed, that not only in every island and parish, but almost in every farm, a small portion belonged to each of them. In such times, and with such people, it may easily be conceived what disorder would arise from this state of property. Frequent differences and quarrels took place between the tenants, in ploughing, sowing, and reaping their fields;



fields; and these were sometimes so enflamed by the friends of the respective parties, that the consequences of them were, not only lawsuits, in a high degree vexatious, but much reproachful language, terminating in blows and bloodshed, and even assassination and murder. To remedy these evils, this sagacious and pacific prelate resigned the whole of the episcopal lands that were thus intermixed, into the hands of his Sovereign; and received for himself and his successors in office, an equivalent in lands, separate and distinct, commodiously situated on the Mainland, and the islands more immediately around it. Though, by this exchange, the value of the bishopric might have been somewhat diminished, as the lands received were supposed to be both of smaller extent, and of inferior quality; yet, as continued and endless contentions were thereby prevented, and concord among neighbours preserved, the transaction reflects honour on the projector, and was a general benefit to the country.

To prevent, in future, all interference between the bishops and those that possessed the earldom, the two jurisdictions were separated, and rendered distinct; and the Bishop was invested with the sole right of administering justice within the limits of his own property.

Soon after this exchange took place, and some time subsequent to the Earl's condemnation and forfeiture, when tranquillity had been restored to the islands by means of his judicious exertions, he was in such favour with his Sovereign James the Sixth, that he translated him to the South, and appointed him Archbishop of Glasgow.

George Graham, of the family of Inchbraky, who succeeded him, was 1615. first a minister at Scone, then Bishop of Dunblane, whence he was translated to the see of Orkney, where he discharged, with much credit to himself, the duties of the episcopal function for twenty-three years.

About this time, the General Assembly at Glasgow met, and with rigour unsuitable to their office as ministers of a meek and benevolent Master, not only set aside, but excommunicated the Episcopal order without mercy. This prelate, afraid of sharing the same fate, and dreading the penal consequences, resigned his office, which he declared to be unlawful, and that he was unfeignedly grieved at having held such an office so long in the Church. On account of this submission, whether proceeding from con-



viſion, or from motives of prudence, he was only depoſed by the Aſſembly, and thereby ſaved his eſtate and money on bond, which would have been all forfeited, had he, like many of the reſt of his order, undergone excommunication \*.

After his reſignation, the revenues of his ſee were let in leaſe to Sir William Dick of Braid, who collected them, by his factors, for eight years †.

As ſoon as the Epiſcopal mode of Church government was revived, Robert Baron, Profeſſor of Divinity in the Marſhall College of Aberdeen, was elected his ſucceſſor in the ſee of Orkney, to which he would unqueſtionably been an ornament; as may appear from the excellence of his character and writings, had he not been compelled, by the turbulence of the times, to flee from the country. He died at Berwick before conſecration.

We are not informed in what manner, or by whom, the clerical office was held, or the parochial duties were performed, during the interval of Preſbytery that ſucceeded.

Thoſe at the helm of affairs being then buſied in planting the churches in the central and more populous parts of the kingdom, neglected, perhaps, to extend their views, for ſome time, to this remote ſequeſtered province; and, in that caſe, the inferior orders of the clergy would probably continue to diſcharge the duties of their office, encouraged and maintained by the people.

The rents of the biſhopric were granted by Parliament to the city of Edinburgh; and by the Provost and Magiſtrates farmed to two gentlemen in Orkney, Mr. James Baikie of Tankerneſs, and Mr. George Buchanan of Sound, who, either jointly or ſeparately, held them to the time of the Reſtoration ‡.

King Charles the Firſt, in the miſt of his troubles, granted theſe iſlands, with the whole juriſdictions and royalties that belonged to them, to William Earl of Morton, under the name or in the form of a mortgage,

\* Keith's Catalogue of Scots Biſhops.

† Diſcharges *penes* Sir J. Stewart.

‡ Idem.



redeemable by the Crown, on payment of thirty thousand pounds Sterling \*. This nobleman, soon after he had obtained the grant, retired hither; and, while disorders invaded the heart of the kingdom, he spent the remainder of his days in silence and security. 1643.

His family suffered a sad reverse of fortune under the usurpation of Cromwell. He stripped them of these possessions, on account of their attachment to the Royal cause; and built a temporary fort, still known by the name of the Mount, in which he placed a garrison, to overawe and plunder, as well as protect the islands. During the power of Cromwell, his soldiers were guilty of several irregularities and oppressions; but they also were of considerable advantage to the islands. They introduced a superior mode of cultivating the ground, and the planting of cabbages, which were before that time in a great measure unknown. They also taught the inhabitants the use of marl as a manure, the improvement of the country houses, and the art of making locks and keys to secure them.

During the time of the Commonwealth, the people in general discovered no affection for the new principles, but seem to have been attached to the line of their ancient Sovereigns; since the Marquis of Montrose, that great champion of Royalty, had no sooner landed on these shores, than he easily persuaded many of them to join his standard, and march to the south; whence scarcely any of them ever returned.

As soon as the Restoration took place, an Earl of Morton of the same family, resumed the possession of the earldom, of which his ancestors had been so unjustly despoiled, and was in due time reinstated in all its privileges. Apprehensive, however, that these islands might devolve on the Crown by the general act of revocation, he exerted all his interest to obtain a new grant; and was so fortunate as to succeed in procuring one, in the form of a mortgage; not in his own name indeed, as his affairs were in disorder, but in the name of the Lord Viscount Grandison in trust, on purpose to support the Morton family. But both this and the former 1662. grant were contested by his Majesty's Advocate; and, in an action brought at his instance, were, in the legal style, *reduced*, or declared null and void,

\* Great Seal Register.



by a decree of the Supreme Court, on grounds foreign to our purpose to mention; when the islands were once more, by act of parliament, annexed  
 1669. to the Crown, and, at the same time, erected into a stewartry\*.

From this time, for the space of more than thirty years, they were under the management of Administration, and were granted on lease to farmers, generally for a term of five years.

Among these, as might be supposed, there were men of very different characters; and this circumstance would certainly influence the condition of the people; who, in the different classes of which they were composed, seem, for the most part, still to have suffered thralldom, and improvements of every kind were neglected. Blind, in a great measure, to the interest of those committed to their charge, and attentive only to their own emolument, the farmers exerted their utmost efforts to acquire gain, and often by means the most unwarrantable. The inhabitants, consequently, were unhappy; and the produce of the islands suffered a very considerable diminution.

1672. Thomas Sydsferf, who had been bishop of Galloway, previously to the commencement of the Commonwealth, was the only prelate alive at the Restoration; and was, soon after that event, promoted to the see of Orkney. The short space of one year put an end to his life and his dignity. To him succeeded Andrew Honyman, who was a native of St. Andrews, where he also received his education. This respectable man first entered into the clerical office as minister of Partencraigs, near Dundee; was afterwards appointed one of the ministers of his native city; from which he was translated to the bishopric of Orkney. The books which he composed show evidently that he was destitute of neither talents nor erudition; and, while he resided in this diocese, his conduct as clearly evinced that he was no stranger to piety and beneficence. With Dr. Sharp, Archbishop of St. Andrews, he seems to have been in habits of intimacy; which, instead of turning out to his advantage, proved the means of impairing his health and shortening his days; for, as he was stepping into that dignitary's coach, he received a shot in his arm with a

\* Act 13. Parl. 2. Ch. II.



poisoned bullet, which had been intended for the Archbishop ; and, though he survived the disaster, he never recovered, but declined gradually from that time. To the no small regret of his people, he died a few years afterwards, and was buried in the cathedral of St. Magnus, in Kirkwall.

His successor was Murdoch Mackenzie, a descendant of the Mackenzies of Gairloch, an ancient branch of the Seaforth family. The early days of this respectable man were spent in the wars of Gustavus Adolphus, King of Sweden ; in which his talents and his conduct acquired him much celebrity. As soon as he returned home, he was first appointed minister of Contin in Ross-shire ; from thence he was translated to Inverness, and afterwards to Elgin ; and Episcopacy had no sooner been restored than he was exalted to the see of Moray ; from which he was, some time afterwards, translated to that of Orkney. His exemplary piety, meekness of spirit, gentleness of manners, prudence, moderation, benevolence, and charity, procured him the esteem and the affections of the people within his charge. After he had lived to the very advanced age of nearly a hundred years, in the entire possession of his faculties and of his virtues, he died, generally lamented, in the very year of the Revolution. Many of his descendants lived here till of late, and inherited a large share of his respectability. He was succeeded in the Episcopal office by Andrew Bruce, who had been Archdeacon of St. Andrews, and Bishop of Dunkeld ; of which last office he had been deprived by the Court, for having discovered an aversion to the design which they had conceived of repealing the laws against Popery. After the death of the Bishop of Orkney, however, the arbitrary monarch that then sat on the throne seems, in this instance, to have repented of his rashness ; and made some atonement for the injustice that he had done him, by raising him again to the prelatical dignity. The change that soon afterwards took place, prevented his coming hither to take possession of his office, for which he had the King's *cong   d'elire* and recommendation ; deprived him and the rest of his order of that elevated rank and spiritual function which had long been considered as discordant, with the genius of the nation, and established the Presbyterian form of church government on the ruins of that of prelacy.

1677.

1688.

The



1696. The great and important event that in time operated these changes, and formed the basis of British liberty, had, for a considerable space, no effect here in regard to religion. In the central and interior parts of the kingdom, the churches required first to be planted; and the pastors were then so few, on account of the sudden change that had taken place, and the tumultuous state of things arising from the violence of parties, that eight years elapsed before Presbytery was established in the place of Episcopacy.

As long as the old form continued, eighteen ordinary officiating clergymen were stationed in the different parishes and islands; and when the new one was substituted in its place, the same number was employed, most of whom had, as they still have, two, and some of them three, churches to occupy, often divided by the sea, and widely distant from one another; in which, notwithstanding divine service is performed with becoming regularity. For some time after the change took place, they were all united into one Presbytery; but they were afterwards divided into two; and, for many years past, they have formed three Presbyteries, consisting of six ministers each; the whole composing a provincial Synod; and, while each Presbytery meets occasionally, the Synod is held annually, or oftener, in Kirkwall. In this town, which is the capital, civil as well as ecclesiastical affairs are taken cognizance of, in the Commissary, Justice of Peace, and Sheriff Courts, and in that of the Admiral. The three Presbyteries choose each three members, and the burgh one, to represent them in the General Assembly of the Church; the county which they compose elects one knight of the shire; and the burgh, in conjunction with four others, makes choice of a burgess; and these two Commissioners represent the inhabitants at large in the British Parliament.

1707. About the time of the Union of the kingdoms, James Earl of Morton repeatedly stated to Parliament the hardships which his family had suffered in consequence of the reduction of the grant to his predecessor; and, while he complained loudly of the manner in which the decree of nullity had been obtained, he made express application to have the grant renewed. To carry a point which he had so much at heart, and in which his interest was so much concerned, he represented the islands as in an uncultivated state, though



though in many respects highly improveable; and declared his intention, provided his request was granted, to apply himself instantly to their improvement, by draining lakes and marshes, cultivating waste lands, dividing commons, and promoting different kinds of fisheries.

By this representation, he obtained a new grant of the islands from Parliament (subject to an annual feu-duty of five hundred pounds) to himself and his heirs, in the old form of a mortgage, redeemable to the Crown on the payment of thirty thousand pounds Sterling.

This mode of holding them, however, did not continue long; for, in the space of little more than thirty years, the grant was not only confirmed by an act of the Legislature, but rendered absolute and irredeemable; on which a charter under the Great Seal was issued, in his favour, of the whole earl- 1742.  
dom of Orkney and lordship of Shetland.

The Earl of Morton having thus got entire possession of what his family had long aimed at, advanced still farther; and was so fortunate as to obtain, in addition, a temporary lease of the rents of the bishopric, and a donation of the rights of Admiralty, which, in these isles, had always been considered as distinct from those of the Admiralty of Scotland. The revenue resulting from all these sources was very considerable, being upwards of three thousand pounds Sterling, independently of all the advantages that arose from the heritable jurisdiction. To give some ground for estimating these advantages, it may be observed, that when the act in the reign of his Majesty George the Second abolished these jurisdictions in the north, the Earl received seven thousand two hundred pounds Sterling, as a remuneration for the benefits of which that act had deprived him\*.

The proprietors of land, trusting to the promises that had been made in his applications to Parliament, now fondly expected that they would be fulfilled; the people rejoiced in the prospect of employment; and the whole inhabitants were elated with the thoughts of having such a nobleman at their head, who had a permanent interest in the place, that would probably in-

\* Statute, 20th George II.



duce him to make such improvements as would both meliorate their condition, and enhance the value of the Islands. Their expectations, however, were disappointed; for, instead of the alterations, which they had good reason to expect, the old system was retained, and the rents, feu-duties, &c. were exacted in the same way, and with the same rigour as formerly. Much indignation was roused against him on that account: and complaints were made against the conduct of their new master; who, they alleged, had not only disappointed their hopes, but increased their burdens, and had taken care to fix high *fiars* \* for the arrears of their services and rent in kind. Though some of these complaints might have been well founded, the ground of others is not so obvious; and, certainly, several accusations were, from time to time, brought against him, for things of which he appears to have been perfectly innocent.

The Earl, notwithstanding the excellence of his estate, found much inconvenience in holding it; as every man must do, whose revenue arises from feu-duties. The vassals of a subject-superior ever have been, and ever will be, the prey of discontent. Blind to their own circumstances, they seem to forget that they inherited or purchased their lands under that tenure, and that the descendant or successor of those that feued them has the same right to his feu-duties in kind, or the value of them, that they can produce to their property. Hence, the constant murmurs that prevail on account of the restriction they are under, in disposing of the produce of their land; their reluctance in complying with almost every service, and even the attempts that are sometimes made, on frivolous pretences, to withhold altogether the just rights of the superior. Here the vassals are numerous, and from the extent of their feus, their talents, and their education, very powerful; and, from the natural influence which these men of property had acquired among the people, ever ready to adopt their passions and imbibe their prejudices, the complaints against the Earl and his agents at

\* In Scotland, the Sheriff of each county, after having received from the farmers an account of the quantity and price of the grain which they have sold during the year, fixes the average price (which is called the *fiars*) according to which all rent in grain is paid.



last became general. Molested with these, without end; opposed in every measure, and embroiled in quarrels and lawsuits that were troublesome and expensive, the Earl grew weary of an estate from which he reaped little personal or political advantage; and therefore disposed, for a valuable consideration, of every right that he had in these Islands, to the father of the Right Honourable Lord Dundas, who is now in possession. 1766.



## B O O K III.

THE PRESENT STATE OF THESE ISLANDS, THEIR FAVOURABLE  
SITUATION AND CIRCUMSTANCES, AND THE ADVANTAGES  
THAT MIGHT BE DERIVED FROM THEM.

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## CHAP I.

## THEIR NATURAL HISTORY.

**D**ID the plan which we have adopted, or the limits prescribed to this Work, permit, there would be no great difficulty in giving a full and complete account of the various productions that are here to be found in the animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms. This, however, would be in a great measure an unnecessary task; as it could neither augment the stock of natural knowledge, nor amuse the ordinary reader.

If those that are best acquainted with this subject, as treated in the works of the most celebrated modern writers\*, were to examine the natural history of these islands, they would soon have reason to conclude, that little new was to be expected from this country. A moment's reflection may convince us, that this is no more than what might have been naturally expected from the situation of these islands, which are, on the one hand, at no great distance from Scandinavia, and, on the other, almost contiguous to Great Britain. A few non-descripts, indeed, might, after a laborious research, perhaps be discovered; but the benefits that would result from

\* Pennant, Linnæus, Lightfoot, Kirwan.



such a discovery, would not, it is presumed, by any means compensate for the time and the labour. Leaving, therefore, such discoveries to those who have more time and inclination for these researches, we shall confine our attention to the most common and most valuable productions of nature.

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### SECTION I.

## MINERALOGY.

THE most obvious strata, and the metallic veins that, in some instances, have been found to intersect or traverse these Islands, will claim our notice in this Section.

With regard to both these particulars, but especially the former, the Islands, in general, discover no small degree of similarity; and, as far as observation has hitherto reached, seem to contain nothing that, in a mineralogical point of view, is very interesting.

Such of them as are situated to the north of the Mainland, and, from that circumstance, are denominated the North Isles, have their strata, for the most part, consisting of sandstone, sandstone flag, schistose clay, and limestone; in some instances, of basalt, and in some, of breccia.

The sandstone, which, through the whole of them, is very plentiful, is in some places red, in others grey, or of a dirty white; and, according to the proportion of the original earths that it contains, it sometimes approaches the argillaceous and sometimes the silicious genus\*. Their limestone

\* There is reason to suspect that the calcareous sandstone, and flag, formerly described as constituting a considerable extent of the strata of these islands, has been confounded with silicious, or flinty sandstone; of which the editor did not happen to see any in the islands.

The calcareous sandstone, is of a blue, or greyish blue colour; owing to bitumen in its composition. By exposure to air, the bitumen undergoes slow inflammation, and the stone becomes grey, or whitish grey.



stone and basalt are generally covered with sandstone; and so little metallic ore does this part of the group seem to contain, that the only veins which have yet been discovered, are two of lead, the one on the north-east, and the other on the south-west side of the island of Shapinsay.

Those islands that lye on the opposite quarter of the Mainland, and are hence called the South Isles, though very different in their external appearance, contain almost the same strata. They abound in sandstone of different sorts; and, with sandstone flags, they contain much schistose clay, but have little or no basalt, and nearly as little limestone, unless in the shape of calcareous spar, in a few instances: it is found forming irregular veins, and in detached masses, in a rock of breccia porphery, west from Melfetter. This spar also frequently occupies small veins in the calcareous sandstone, as already described \*. In Hoy, which, with Waas, makes only one island, and

Hardness various; but frequently considerable.

The beds are of various, and rarely of considerable thickness. They decompose at the edges, so as to exhibit a number of subordinate laminæ, or plates, of which the bed is composed. They split horizontally in the direction of these plates. The cross fracture is rough, or transversely irregular, owing to the plates not all breaking in the same line.

The stone yields from 10 to 35 parts in a 100 of carbonate of lime; which forms the cement between its particles. When the lime is in greater proportion, it passes into the class of limestones.

The veins which intersect these strata are sometimes filled with spar of lime; sometimes with martial pyrites; rarely with those of copper, or copper and iron mixed: and nodules of such pyrites are often found disseminated in the body of the stone. In other cases the veins are filled with soft clay, or with angular fragments of the strata; which are generally connected by spar of lime, crystalized in the interstices. No veins of whinstone, or basalt, were seen to intersect these strata, either here or in Caithness. —E.

\* Stratified limestone abounds on the west side of the bay of Aith-hope near Melfetter; in the islands of Pharray, and Ryfalittle, belonging to the same property: and it would probably be found in many other places, were the people at pains to search for it.

The colour of the beds is dark blue, approaching to black. owing to coal-culm and tar in the composition of the stone. Chips, and particles of black glossy coal, are frequently included in the body of the strata. By exposure to the air, it becomes whitish grey, and shews a tendency to subdivide into horizontal laminæ, or plates; like the last described. Its cross fracture is similar to the former; but the edges of the laminæ more smooth. Hardness considerable; and rings when struck with a hammer.

The strata not being laid open, the Editor had no opportunity of ascertaining their comparative value. But in the Aith-hope limestone, the average of three different beds, were found to contain

|                          |   |   |   |   |     |
|--------------------------|---|---|---|---|-----|
| Carbonate of lime        | - | - | - | - | 79  |
| Clay, coal-tar, and culm | - | - | - | - | 21  |
|                          |   |   |   |   | 100 |



and which is by far the most elevated land in the country, some attempts have been made to discover iron ore under the sandstone, which is there, as in many other places the upper stratum; and those who made them had no reason to repent their exertions, since they found hæmatitical iron ore that was tolerably rich, and also in considerable quantity. Similar attempts have been made in two or three different places in South Ronaldshay, to find galena, or lead ore, under the same sort of sandstone stratum, but with a success that was much less flattering. Burray, which is separated from the island last mentioned by a sound of only a mile broad, contains, in general, also the same kind of sandstone as its upper stratum; and the sandstone, in some instances, is found to alternate with schistose clay of a dark or black colour, frequently interspersed with bitumen, and veins of calcareous spar. These strata, and alternations and mixtures, have been thought to be such evident indications of pit-coal, as to warrant an attempt to discover it. If it were found at a moderate expence, and in considerable quantity, it would be a signal benefit, not only to this, but to the other northern counties.

The Mainland, notwithstanding its extent, and great variety of surface, is scarcely more interesting than the other islands in point of mineral pro-

Major Moodie has lately burnt quantities of this stone into lime, with peats; which being applied to land has produced such extraordinary effects, as clearly to demonstrate the incalculable advantage these islands would derive from the application of calcareous manures, which, under various forms, abound almost every where.—But this has never entered into the consideration of the people.

The strata on the north side of Pharray, are almost wholly limestone, of various degrees of purity. One Stratum, near an old church, contains

|                                    |   |   |   |   |       |
|------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|-------|
| Carbonate of lime                  | - | - | - | - | 72    |
| Clay and quartz, coal-tar and culm | - | - | - | - | 28    |
|                                    |   |   |   |   | <hr/> |
|                                    |   |   |   |   | 100   |

A stratum at the broad point of Pharray contains.

|                          |   |   |   |   |       |
|--------------------------|---|---|---|---|-------|
| Carbonate of lime        | - | - | - | - | 86    |
| Clay, coal-tar, and culm | - | - | - | - | 14    |
|                          |   |   |   |   | <hr/> |
|                          |   |   |   |   | 100   |

The limestone of Ryfa-little contains  $86\frac{1}{4}$  parts of carbonate of lime, in a 100 of stone, with the same ingredients as the last.

This limestone, and the calcareous sandstone, with which it is connected, often exhibits bitumen, or coal-tar, in its fissures. Several springs, which issue from these rocks, exhibit naphtha, or the light oil of coal-tar, on their surfaces.—E.

ductions.



ductions. Along both its north and south sides, as well as in its internal parts, to its eastern boundary, and indeed through its whole extent, except towards its western extremity, the strata that are observed are, sandstone, sandstone flag, schistose clay, and, in some places, basalt and limestone. The strata are, in general, either horizontal, or form a very acute angle with the horizon. They are of various thickness, in different places, and, for the most part, the sandstone and schistose clay are found to alternate with each other. In many places, the sandstone has a red colour, probably from the quantity of iron it contains; in others it is grey, or whitish, and has commonly an argillaceous cement, but often in small quantity; and the most common form in which it is found, is sandstone flag, that is very frequently quarried for building and roofing houses. Towards the west shore, near the house of Skaill, in the parish of Sandwick, the silicious genus occurs so hard, that it is cut into millstones, with which most of the grain in the country is ground.

Silicious sandstone, of the same kind, or at least of a nature very similar, is to be found among the soft sandstone strata, near the bay of Scapa, which there is every reason to believe might, with equal success, be applied to the same beneficial purpose.

Several masses of iron pyrites, sometimes globular, and sometimes amorphous, are, in some instances, dispersed through it, as may be seen in those rocks that bound the coast, and stretch from that bay, in a western direction, along the south side of the island. In this same tract on this shore, indications of galena have been observed, and these too of such a flattering nature, as to induce some to search for lead; but their labours have not hitherto been very successful.

At a place named Yasnaby, on the west border of the island, veins of sulphate of barytes are seen traversing the sandstone, and in several places, calcareous spar, iron pyrites, and galena, are interspersed with it. The schistose clay is, in some instances, entirely decomposed; and, in many others, it retains its character so completely, as to be quarried to a very considerable extent, for the purpose of covering houses. The black craig at Stromness, and an eminence at the head of the bay of Frith, furnish slates formed of it in great numbers, which, however well they may serve the purpose of roofing



ing in ordinary cases, are much inferior, in point of beauty and duration, to those of Ardesia, that are raised in such quantities, for the same purpose, at Easdale, in the Western Islands; and at Balahulion, and other places on the Mainland.

Near the Manse of Stromness, which is about a mile to the westward of the town, there may be seen, embedded in a rock consisting of schistose clay, Lydian stone, which it contains in its cavities filled with bitumen; and, on the adjacent shore, in a rock intermediate between schistose and indurated clay, many pieces of galena.

Struck with the flattering appearance of these, men of skill in mineralogy were induced to inspect the place with accuracy; and as they judged it probable that lead might be found there in abundance, a company of miners were employed, who wrought for some time, but were at length compelled to desist, being convinced that all the metal which they could procure, would not be adequate to the expence of the labour.

A few miles to the north, and near the above-mentioned Yasnaby, a large stratum of black coloured limestone is found, which alternates with a rock, intermediate between schistose flag and schistose clay, and contains in it large crystals of hornblende, and, in some instances, small cavities filled with bitumen.

Still farther northwards, in the same direction, and in the parish of Birsay, at Buckquoy and Swanay, marble and alabaster have been found; and the water of the loch of Swanay has frequently on its surface such a thick scum of a copper colour, that some have thought, not without reason, that copper, on a diligent search, might be found, either within it, or in its vicinity \* †.

Such are the strata that compose the surface of the Mainland; such are the veins and rocks, and minerals that it contains through its whole range, except in an extent of a few miles that environs the town of Stromness. This tract, on the most superficial inspection, exhibits fossils of a very different nature; for, instead of sandstone, sandstone flag, schistose clay, lime-

\* There is reason to suspect, that the copper in question is neither more nor less than ochre of iron, which often gives a yellowish brown colour to the water emitted from chalybeate springs, of which there are not few in the Orkneys.—E.

† Wallace's Description of the Orkney Islands, London Edition.



stone, basalt, and breccia, which we meet with so often in other places, here we find granite, that appears to occupy the central part; and this granite is covered with gneiss, micaceous schistus, and hornblende rock; all of which are considered as primary strata\*; and is traversed by very large veins of compact sulphate of barytes.

Whether any such exist in the rest of the islands, even in a small degree, or in the order they are found in that district, is a matter of uncertainty; but, so far as observation has yet extended, they seem to be confined to it exclusively.

It is unnecessary to describe the different soils which cover these strata, as we have already enlarged on their nature and qualities, and offered some hints for their improvement†.

\* In composing this Section, I acknowledge myself much indebted to the ingenious author of the Mineralogy of the Shetland and Orkney Islands, whose facts and observations, in regard to this subject, I have taken the liberty to adopt on several occasions.

† There is a remarkable rock, not noticed by our author, at the west entrance of the Pentland Frith, near Melfetter. Some have pronounced it to be lava, others wacken; and the late Dr. Walker, to whom specimens were shewn, called it baroptenus, or fruitstone. We have given it the name of breccia porphyry.

The ground is of various colours, brown, red, grey, white, yellow, and greenish. Small rounded pebbles, generally quartz, of a white, or greenish colour, are disseminated through it: and large angular fragments of granite, and other stones, are also found immersed in various places. Veins, and detached nodules of white spar of lime, are frequent. In some places it is rudely stratified; but in general, is a shapeless mass, or blotch. Towards the east, it graduates into the common ferruginous breccia, or pudding-stone, of great hardness.

Parts of this rock are susceptible of a fine polish, and have been formed into cups, vases, and ornamental trinkets. It seems to have been placed at the fauces of the Frith, to prevent the sea from cutting a passage in the soft sandstone, straight down through the bay of Longhope, and converting into a rapid channel, what is now one of the most commodious harbours in the world.

With regard to the doubt expressed by our author, whether the primary strata exist, *even in a small degree*, in other parts of the islands? it can be answered, that they have nowhere been discovered to exist, *in situ*, in any degree, except at the ridge behind Stromness. But, in a meadow near the parish church of Sanday, there is a large isolated mass of gneiss, calculated at 12 or 14 tons weight, which, if it had not been brought there for some religious purpose, must have travelled from the ridge of Stromness. The strata of Sanday are sandstone flag, and limestone; and no rocks are visible, which could have furnished this mass, nearer than those at Stromness, distant more than thirty miles. If the mass has travelled from Stromness, by the impulse of water rolling it down a declivity, it proves two things.—1. That the primary ridge of Stromness, though now overlooked by the secondary hills of Hoy, and other eminences in the Orkneys, was originally of great elevation; and that the land sloped from it in all directions, having its most rapid declivity towards the north-east.—2. It verifies the conjecture of our author—that these islands were originally a very extensive, and connected body of land, uninterrupted by sounds, and channels of the sea.—E.



## SECTION II.

## B O T A N Y.

FOR the sake of brevity, it is proposed not to trace every plant to the class and order to which it belongs, but to content ourselves with stating the place of its abode, its English name, and the generic and specific appellation which it bears in the *Systema Vegetabilium* of Linnæus.

| <i>Generic Names, &amp;c.</i> | <i>English Names.</i>   | <i>Habitations.</i>     |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| HIPPURIS.                     | Marestail.              | A pool by Claiftron.    |
| CALLITRICHE.                  | Starwort, chickweed.    | In fresh waters.        |
| Sp. 1. <i>Verna.</i>          |                         |                         |
| 2. <i>Autumnalis.</i>         |                         |                         |
| VERONICA.                     | Speedwell.              | Almost everywhere.      |
| Sp. 1. <i>Spicata.</i>        |                         |                         |
| 2. <i>Officinalis.</i>        |                         |                         |
| 3. <i>Becabunga.</i>          |                         |                         |
| 4. <i>Scutellata.</i>         |                         |                         |
| 5. <i>Arvensis.</i>           |                         |                         |
| 6. <i>Agrestis.</i>           |                         |                         |
| 7. <i>Hederifolia.</i>        |                         |                         |
| PINGUICULA.                   | Butterwort, whiterot.   | Hills of Waas and Hoy.  |
| Sp. 1. <i>Vulgaris.</i>       |                         | Wet, slimy places.      |
| 2. <i>Alpina.</i>             |                         |                         |
| ANTHOXANTHUM.                 | Vernal or spring grass. | In meadows.             |
| Sp. 1. <i>Oderatum.</i>       |                         |                         |
| VALERIANA.                    | Wild valerian.          | Hoy, Rossmire, &c.      |
| Sp. 1. <i>Officinalis.</i>    |                         |                         |
| IRIS.                         | Yellow water-flag.      | Marshes and wet ground. |
| SCIRPUS.                      | Clubrush.               | Moist or wet places.    |
| Sp. 1. <i>Palustris.</i>      |                         |                         |



| <i>Generic Names, &amp;c.</i> | <i>English Names.</i>       | <i>Habitations.</i>         |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 2. <i>Cespitosus.</i>         |                             |                             |
| 3. <i>Acicularis.</i>         |                             |                             |
| 4. <i>Setaceus.</i>           |                             |                             |
| ERIOPHORUM.                   | Cotton grafs.               | In meadows, wet ground.     |
| Sp. 1. <i>Polystachion.</i>   |                             |                             |
| 2. <i>Vaginatium.</i>         |                             |                             |
| NARDUS.                       | Mat grafs.                  | Barren ground, wet, or dry. |
| Sp. 1. <i>Stricta.</i>        |                             |                             |
| PANICUM.                      | Loofe panic grafs.          | Cultivated fields.          |
| Sp. 1. <i>Crus-galli.</i>     |                             |                             |
| PHLEUM.                       | Meadow cats-tail.           | Meadows, pastures.          |
| Sp. 1. <i>Pratense.</i>       |                             |                             |
| ALOPECURUS.                   | Meadow foxtail-grafs.       | Meadows, <i>passim</i> .    |
| Sp. 1. <i>Pratensis.</i>      |                             |                             |
| DACTYLIS.                     | Roughcocks-foot grafs.      | Meadows.                    |
| Sp. 1. <i>Glomeratus.</i>     |                             |                             |
| AGROSTIS.                     | Silky bent grafs.           | Everywhere.                 |
| Sp. 1. <i>Spica-venti.</i>    |                             |                             |
| 2. <i>Capillaris.</i>         |                             |                             |
| AIRA.                         | Hair-grafs.                 | Corn fields.                |
| Sp. 1. <i>Aquatica.</i>       |                             |                             |
| 2. <i>Cespitosa.</i>          |                             |                             |
| 3. <i>Flexuosa.</i>           |                             |                             |
| 4. <i>Caryophylla.</i>        |                             |                             |
| BRIZA.                        | Quaking grafs, Ladies hair. | Pastures.                   |
| Sp. 1. <i>Media.</i>          |                             |                             |
| POA.                          | Great meadow grafs.         | Meadows, <i>passim</i> .    |
| Sp. 1. <i>Pratensis.</i>      |                             |                             |
| 2. <i>Annua.</i>              |                             |                             |
| 3. <i>Loliacea.</i>           |                             |                             |
| FESTUCA.                      | Sheeps fescue grafs.        | Pasture ground.             |
| Sp. 1. <i>Ovina.</i>          |                             |                             |
|                               |                             | 2. <i>Vivi-</i>             |



| <i>Generic Names, &amp;c.</i> | <i>English Names.</i>    | <i>Habitations.</i>    |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| 2. <i>Vivipara.</i>           |                          |                        |
| 3. <i>Rubra.</i>              |                          |                        |
| 4. <i>Fluitans.</i>           |                          |                        |
| AVENA.                        | Bearded or wild goats.   | Among corn.            |
| Sp. 1. <i>Fatua.</i>          |                          |                        |
| 2. <i>Flaves cens.</i>        |                          |                        |
| LOLIUM.                       | Darnel.                  | Among corn.            |
| Sp. 1. <i>Perenne.</i>        |                          |                        |
| ELYMUS.                       | Lyme-grafs.              | In sandy links.        |
| TRITICUM.                     | Wheat, dogs, quick,      |                        |
| Sp. 1. <i>Repens.</i>         | couch grafs.             | In cultivated fields.  |
| CYNOSORUS.                    | Crested dogs-tail grafs. | In dry pasture ground. |
| Sp. 1. <i>Cristatus.</i>      |                          |                        |
| MONTIA.                       | Water chickweed.         | Fountains or springs.  |
| Sp. 1. <i>Fontana.</i>        |                          |                        |
| SCABIOSA.                     | Devil's bit.             | Meadows, pastures.     |
| PLANTAGO.                     | Plantain.                | Roads or highways.     |
| Sp. 1. <i>Major.</i>          |                          |                        |
| 2. <i>Media.</i>              |                          |                        |
| 3. <i>Lanceolata.</i>         |                          |                        |
| 4. <i>Loeflingii.</i>         |                          |                        |
| 5. <i>Maritima.</i>           |                          |                        |
| 6. <i>Coronopus.</i>          |                          |                        |
| 7. <i>Montana.</i>            |                          |                        |
| 8. <i>Uniflora.</i>           |                          |                        |
| GALLIUM.                      | Ladiesbed-straw, goose-  |                        |
| Sp. 1. <i>Verum.</i>          | grafs.                   | Meadows.               |
| 2. <i>Montanum.</i>           |                          |                        |
| 3. <i>Uliginosum.</i>         |                          |                        |
| 4. <i>Palustre.</i>           |                          |                        |
| 5. <i>Boreale.</i>            |                          |                        |
| 6. <i>Aparine.</i>            |                          |                        |



| <i>Generic Names, &amp;c.</i>                                                                                                                                                         | <i>English Names.</i>                | <i>Habitations.</i>                                               |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ALCHEMILLA.<br>Sp. 1. <i>Vulgaris.</i>                                                                                                                                                | Ladies mantle.                       | Banks of rivulets.                                                |
| POTAMOGETON.<br>Sp. 1. <i>Natans.</i><br>2. <i>Perfoliatum.</i><br>3. <i>Lucens.</i><br>4. <i>Compressum.</i><br>5. <i>Gramineum.</i><br>6. <i>Pectinatum.</i><br>7. <i>Pusillum.</i> | Pond weed.                           | Lakes, pools, wet ground.                                         |
| SAGINA.<br>Sp. 1. <i>Procumbens.</i>                                                                                                                                                  | Pearlwort, breakstone-<br>chickweed. | Houses, walls.                                                    |
| CYNOGLOSSUM.<br>Sp. 1. <i>Officinale.</i>                                                                                                                                             | Hounds tongue.                       | Almost everywhere.                                                |
| LYCOPSIS.<br>Sp. 1. <i>Arvensis.</i>                                                                                                                                                  | Small wild bugloss.                  | Among corn.                                                       |
| PRIMULA.<br>Sp. 1. <i>Vulgaris.</i><br>2. <i>Farinosa.</i>                                                                                                                            | Common primrose.                     | Banks of rivulets.                                                |
| MENYANTHES.<br>Sp. 1. <i>Trifoliata.</i>                                                                                                                                              | Marsh trefoil, buckbean.             | Watery ground.                                                    |
| LONICERA.<br>Sp. 1. <i>Periclymenum.</i>                                                                                                                                              | Honeysuckle, woodbine.               | Banks of rivulets in Hoy.                                         |
| RIBES.<br>Sp. 1. <i>Rubrum.</i>                                                                                                                                                       | Currants.                            | Berrydale in Hoy.                                                 |
| HEDERA.<br>Sp. 1. <i>Helix.</i>                                                                                                                                                       | Ivy.                                 | Banks of rivulets in Hoy.                                         |
| GLAUX.<br>Sp. 1. <i>Maritima.</i>                                                                                                                                                     | Sea milkwort, black salt-<br>wort.   | Meeting of salt and fresh<br>water, as at the bridge<br>of Weath. |
| GENTIANA.<br>Sp. 1. <i>Campestris.</i>                                                                                                                                                | Dwarf gentian.                       | Dry hilly pasture ground.                                         |



| <i>Generic Names, &amp;c.</i> | <i>English Names.</i>       | <i>Habitations.</i>                                                                       |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| BETA.                         | Sea beet.                   | Commonly on the sea shores.                                                               |
| Sp. 1. <i>Vulgaris.</i>       |                             |                                                                                           |
| HYDROCOTYLE.                  | Marsh pennywort.            | Marshy places.                                                                            |
| Sp. 1. <i>Vulgaris.</i>       |                             |                                                                                           |
| ANGELICA.                     | Wild angelica.              | The banks of rivulets.                                                                    |
| Sp. 1. <i>Sylvestris.</i>     |                             |                                                                                           |
| CICUTA.                       | Long-leaved water hemlock.  | <i>Passim.</i>                                                                            |
| SCANDIX.                      | Shepherds needle, ramscomb. | Among corn.                                                                               |
| Sp. 1. <i>Pecten.</i>         |                             |                                                                                           |
| ALSINE.                       | Common chickweed.           | Almost everywhere.                                                                        |
| Sp. 1. <i>Media.</i>          |                             |                                                                                           |
| STATICE.                      | Thrift, sea gilliflower.    | On the sea-shores.                                                                        |
| Sp. 1. <i>Armeria.</i>        |                             |                                                                                           |
| LINUM.                        |                             |                                                                                           |
| Sp. 1. <i>Catharticum.</i>    | Purging flax.               | In dry grounds.                                                                           |
| DROSERA.                      | Sundew, Rosafolis.          | In the fens of Hoy.                                                                       |
| Sp. 1. <i>Rotundifolia.</i>   |                             |                                                                                           |
| 2. <i>Longifolia.</i>         |                             |                                                                                           |
| NARTHECIUM.                   | Bastard asphodel.           | In peat mosses.                                                                           |
| Sp. 1. <i>Offifragum.</i>     |                             |                                                                                           |
| JUNCUS.                       | Rush.                       | Fenny ground, wet places, on the banks, and in the rivulets of Hoy, and such like places. |
| Sp. 1. <i>Conglomeratus.</i>  |                             |                                                                                           |
| 2. <i>Effusus.</i>            |                             |                                                                                           |
| 3. <i>Filiformis.</i>         |                             |                                                                                           |
| 4. <i>Squarrosus.</i>         |                             |                                                                                           |
| 5. <i>Articulatus.</i>        |                             |                                                                                           |
| 6. <i>Triformis.</i>          |                             |                                                                                           |
| 7. <i>Campestris.</i>         |                             |                                                                                           |
| 8. <i>Sylvestris.</i>         |                             |                                                                                           |
| RUMEX.                        | Docks and forrels.          | Mostly on wet ground in the fissures of rocks,                                            |
| Sp. 1. <i>Acutus.</i>         |                             | 2. <i>Crif-</i>                                                                           |



| <i>Generic Names, &amp;c.</i> | <i>English Names.</i>     | <i>Habitations.</i>      |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| 2. <i>Crissus.</i>            |                           | and also in dry sandy    |
| 3. <i>Obtusifolius.</i>       |                           | fields sometimes.        |
| 4. <i>Maritimus.</i>          |                           |                          |
| 5. <i>Digynus.</i>            |                           |                          |
| 6. <i>Acetosa.</i>            |                           |                          |
| 7. <i>Acetofella.</i>         |                           |                          |
| EPILOBIUM.                    | Willow-herb.              | Meadows and wet places,  |
| Sp. 1. <i>Hirsutum.</i>       |                           | and sometimes on the     |
| 2. <i>Ramosum.</i>            |                           | banks of rivulets.       |
| 3. <i>Montanum.</i>           |                           |                          |
| 4. <i>Palustre.</i>           |                           |                          |
| VACCINIUM.                    | Wortle, bilberries, blea- |                          |
| Sp. 1. <i>Myrtillus.</i>      | berries.                  | Hills among heath.       |
| ERICA.                        | Heath.                    | Hills and uncultivated   |
| Sp. 1. <i>Fulgaris.</i>       |                           | places.                  |
| 2. <i>Cinerea.</i>            |                           |                          |
| 3. <i>Tetralix.</i>           |                           |                          |
| POLYGONUM.                    | Arsenart, knot-grass.     | Loch of Skeal, among     |
| Sp. 1. <i>Amphibium.</i>      |                           | corn, and on the banks   |
| 2. <i>Aviculare.</i>          |                           | of rills.                |
| 3. <i>Convolvervolus.</i>     |                           |                          |
| 4. <i>Hydropiper.</i>         |                           |                          |
| PYROLA.                       | Common winter green.      | Among the shrubs, at     |
| Sp. 1. <i>Rotundifolia.</i>   |                           | Berrydale in Hoy.        |
| ARBUTUS.                      | Mountain strawberry-      |                          |
| Sp. 1. <i>Uva ursi.</i>       | tree.                     | On the sides and tops of |
| 2. <i>Alpina.</i>             |                           | the hills of Hoy.        |
| CHRYSOPLENIUM.                | Golden Saxifrage.         | In a rivulet in Hoy, and |
| Sp. 1. <i>Oppositifolium.</i> |                           | in some wet places.      |
| SAXIFRAGA.                    | Yellow mountain fone-     |                          |
| Sp. 1. <i>Aizoides.</i>       | green.                    | Wet places, among the    |
| 2. <i>Autumnalis.</i>         |                           | rocks and hills of Hoy.  |
| 3. <i>Cespitosa.</i>          |                           |                          |



| <i>Generic Names, &amp;c.</i>                                                                                | <i>English Names.</i>         | <i>Habitations.</i>                         |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| CUCUBALUS.<br>Sp. 1. <i>Beben.</i>                                                                           | Berry-bearing chick-weed.     | In the clefts of many rocks.                |
| SILENE.<br>Sp. 1. <i>Nutans.</i>                                                                             | Nottingham catch-fly.         | In a meadow of Binafkart.                   |
| STELLARIA.                                                                                                   | Sandwort, flich-wort.         | Shady wet places.                           |
| ARENARIA.<br>Sp. 1. <i>Peploides.</i><br>2. <i>Serpyllifolia.</i><br>3. <i>Saxatilis.</i>                    | Sea chickweed.                | Sea shore, on sandy places.                 |
| LYCHNIS.<br>Sp. 1. <i>Flos-cuculi.</i><br>2. <i>Dioica.</i>                                                  | Meadow pink cuckoo-flower.    | Meadows and wetground.                      |
| CERASTIUM.<br>Sp. 1. <i>Vulgatum.</i><br>2. <i>Arvense.</i><br>3. <i>Tomentosum.</i><br>4. <i>Aquaticum.</i> | Mouse-eared chick-weed.       | On meadows, walls, and on the hills of Hoy. |
| SPERGULA.<br>Sp. 1. <i>Arvensis.</i><br>2. <i>Nodosa.</i>                                                    | Corn and knotted spurrey.     | In a marsh between Yasknabie and Kubuster.  |
| SORBUS.<br>Sp. 1. <i>Domestica.</i><br>2. <i>Aucuparia.</i>                                                  | Service-tree, mountain ash.   | In Hoy, and in some other places.           |
| SPIREA.<br>Sp. 1. <i>Ulmaria.</i>                                                                            | Meadow sweet.                 | By the sides of rills, and in wet places.   |
| EUPHORBIA.<br>Sp. 1. <i>Segetalis.</i><br>2. <i>Holioscopia.</i>                                             | Wartwort, sun or corn-spurge. | In cultivated fields.                       |
| ROSA.<br>Sp. 1. <i>Spinosissima.</i><br>2. <i>Arvensis.</i><br>3. <i>Canina.</i>                             | The rose.                     | In moist places.                            |



| <i>Generic Names, &amp;c.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <i>English Names.</i>    | <i>Habitations.</i>                                 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| RUBUS.<br>Sp. 1. <i>Saxatilis</i> .                                                                                                                                                                                            | Stone bramble.           | Berrydale in Hoy.                                   |
| FRAGARIA.<br>Sp. 1. <i>Vesca</i> .                                                                                                                                                                                             | Strawberry.              | Hills, and on the rills in the parish of Frith.     |
| POTENTILLA.<br>Sp. 1. <i>Anserina</i> .<br>2. <i>Argentea</i> .<br>3. <i>Reptans</i> .                                                                                                                                         | Silver weed, wild tanfy. | Roads and meadows.                                  |
| TORMENTILLA.<br>Sp. 1. <i>Evecta</i> .                                                                                                                                                                                         | Tormentil, sept-foil.    | Uncultivated ground.                                |
| GEUM.<br>Sp. 1. <i>Rivale</i> .                                                                                                                                                                                                | Water avens.             | On the banks of some of the rivulets in Hoy.        |
| COMARUM.<br>Sp. 1. <i>Palustre</i> .                                                                                                                                                                                           | Marsh cinquefoil         | Meadows, <i>passim</i> .                            |
| PAPAYER.<br>Sp. 1. <i>Rhoeas</i> .<br>2. <i>Dubium</i> .                                                                                                                                                                       | Poppy.                   | Among corn-fields.                                  |
| RANUNCULUS.<br>Sp. 1. <i>Lingua</i> .<br>2. <i>Flamula</i> .<br>3. <i>Repens</i> .<br>4. <i>Bulbosus</i> .<br>5. <i>Acris</i> .<br>6. <i>Arvensis</i> .<br>7. <i>Aquatilis</i> .<br>8. <i>Ficaria</i> .<br>Var. <i>Verna</i> . | Spearwort, crowfoot.     | Wet meadows, ditches, and pastures and corn-fields. |
| CALTHA.<br>Sp. 1. <i>Palustris</i> .                                                                                                                                                                                           | Marsh marygold.          | In water, or very wet places.                       |
| THALICTRUM.<br>Sp. 1. <i>Minus</i> .<br>2. <i>Alpinum</i> .                                                                                                                                                                    | Meadow rue.              | Hilly ground, and on sandy places.                  |



| <i>Generic Names, &amp;c.</i> | <i>English Names.</i>   | <i>Habitations.</i>                        |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| MENTHA.                       | Mint.                   | Corn-fields, and in wet meadows.           |
| Sp. 1. <i>Arvensis.</i>       |                         |                                            |
| 2. <i>Aquatica.</i>           |                         |                                            |
| LAMIUM.                       | Dead-nettle, archangel. | Cultivated fields, gardens.                |
| Sp. 1. <i>Album.</i>          |                         |                                            |
| 2. <i>Rubrum.</i>             |                         |                                            |
| 3. <i>Amplexicaule.</i>       |                         |                                            |
| GALEOPSIS.                    | All-heal, nettle hemp.  | Among corn, in fields, and in gardens.     |
| Sp. 1. <i>Ladanum.</i>        |                         |                                            |
| 2. <i>Tetrahit.</i>           |                         |                                            |
| STACHYS.                      | Hedge nettle.           | Cultivated places.                         |
| Sp. 1. <i>Sylvatica.</i>      |                         |                                            |
| 2. <i>Palustris.</i>          |                         |                                            |
| THYMUS.                       | Mother of thyme.        | Hills and high grounds.                    |
| Sp. 1. <i>Serpyllum.</i>      |                         |                                            |
| PRUNELLA.                     | Self-heal.              | Uncultivated places.                       |
| Sp. 1. <i>Vulgaris.</i>       |                         |                                            |
| RHINANTHUS.                   | Yellow - rattle, cocks- |                                            |
| Sp. 1. <i>Crista galli.</i>   | comb.                   | Dry pasture grounds.                       |
| EUPHRASIA.                    | Eye-bright.             | In dry ground.                             |
| Sp. 1. <i>Officinalis.</i>    |                         |                                            |
| PEDICULARIS.                  | Loufewort.              | Common in wet meadows.                     |
| Sp. 1. <i>Sylvatica.</i>      |                         |                                            |
| 2. <i>Palustris.</i>          |                         |                                            |
| SCROPHULARIA.                 | Water figwort, betony.  | In Hoy, on banks of rills.                 |
| Sp. 1. <i>Aquatica.</i>       |                         |                                            |
| DIGITALIS.                    | Fox-glove.              | In barren fields, and uncultivated places. |
| Sp. 1. <i>Purpurea.</i>       |                         |                                            |
| THLASPI.                      | Shepherds purfe.        | In many places.                            |
| Sp. 1. <i>Bursa pastoris.</i> |                         |                                            |
| COCHLEARIA.                   | Scurvy grafs.           | On houses, walls, fea-                     |
|                               | O o 2                   | Sp. 1.                                     |



| <i>Generic Names, &amp;c.</i> | <i>English Names.</i>        | <i>Habitations.</i>                          |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| Sp. 1. <i>Officinalis.</i>    |                              | shores, and uncultivated fields.             |
| 2. <i>Danica.</i>             |                              |                                              |
| 3. <i>Armoracia.</i>          |                              |                                              |
| ERYSIMUM                      | Hedge mustard.               | In considerable quantity near church of Hoy. |
| Sp. 1. <i>Officinale.</i>     |                              |                                              |
| RAPHANUS.                     | Yellow flowered charlock.    | Among corn.                                  |
| Sp. 1. <i>Raphanistrum.</i>   |                              |                                              |
| CARDAMINE.                    | Ladies smock, cuckow-flower. | In corn.                                     |
| Sp. 1. <i>Pratensis.</i>      |                              |                                              |
| SISYMBRIUM.                   | Water cresses.               | In fountains and rills.                      |
| Sp. 1. <i>Aquaticum.</i>      |                              |                                              |
| ARABIS.                       | Codded mouse-ear.            | On walls and dry places.                     |
| Sp. 1. <i>Thaliana.</i>       |                              |                                              |
| 2. <i>Alpina.</i>             |                              |                                              |
| SINAPIS.                      | Wild mustard.                | Cultivated places.                           |
| Sp. 1. <i>Arvensis.</i>       |                              |                                              |
| GERANIUM.                     | Cranebill.                   | Hills of Hoy, and of Orphir.                 |
| Sp. 1. <i>Cicutarium.</i>     |                              |                                              |
| 2. <i>Lucidum.</i>            |                              |                                              |
| 3. <i>Molle.</i>              |                              |                                              |
| 4. <i>Sylvaticum.</i>         |                              |                                              |
| FUMARIA.                      | Fumitory.                    | Cultivated fields.                           |
| Sp. 1. <i>Officinalis.</i>    |                              |                                              |
| 2. <i>Capreolata.</i>         |                              |                                              |
| POLYGALA.                     | Milkwort.                    | Dry pasture ground.                          |
| Sp. 1. <i>Vulgaris.</i>       |                              |                                              |
| ULEX.                         | Furze, whins, gorse.         | By the road to Scapa, and some other places. |
| Sp. 1. <i>Europæus.</i>       |                              |                                              |
| ANTHYLLIS.                    | Kidney vetch, ladies-finger. | Pasture ground.                              |
| Sp. 1. <i>Vulneraria.</i>     |                              |                                              |
| PISUM.                        | Sea-peas.                    | On the sea shores.                           |
| Sp. 1. <i>Marinum.</i>        |                              |                                              |

OROBUS.



| <i>Generic Names, &amp;c.</i>                                                                              | <i>English Names.</i>          | <i>Habitations.</i>                       |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| OROBUS.<br>Sp. 1. <i>Tuberosus</i> .<br>2. <i>Niger</i> .                                                  | Wood-peas, heath-peas.         | Dry places uncultivated.                  |
| LATHYRUS.<br>Sp. 1. <i>Pratensis</i> .                                                                     | Yellow vetchling.              | Meadows and sea-shores<br>in many places. |
| VICIA.<br>Sp. 1. <i>Cracca</i> .<br>2. <i>Sativa</i> .                                                     | Vetch, tare.                   | Cultivated places.                        |
| ERVUM.<br>Sp. 1. <i>Hirsutum</i> .<br>2. <i>Tetraspermium</i> .                                            | Hairy and smooth tare.         | Cultivated fields.                        |
| TRIFOLIUM.<br>Sp. 1. <i>Repens</i> .<br>2. <i>Pratense</i> .<br>3. <i>Medium</i> .<br>4. <i>Montanum</i> . | Common and Dutch<br>clover,    | Meadows and pastures.                     |
| LOTUS.<br>Sp. 1. <i>Corniculatus</i> .                                                                     | Birdsfoot, trefoil.            | In meadows, pastures,<br>and wet places.  |
| HYPERICUM.<br>Sp. 1. <i>Perforatum</i> .                                                                   | St. John's wort.               | In heathy ground.                         |
| SONCHUS.<br>Sp. 1. <i>Oleraceus</i> .<br>2. <i>Arvensis</i> .                                              | Sowthistle.                    | Cultivated ground.                        |
| LEONTODON.<br>Sp. 1. <i>Taraxacum</i> .<br>2. <i>Hispidum</i> .<br>3. <i>Autumnale</i> .                   | Dandelion.                     | Meadows, pastures.                        |
| HIERACIUM.<br>Sp. 1. <i>Murorum</i> .                                                                      | Golden lungwort.               | On dry sea-shores.                        |
| CREPIS.<br>Sp. 1. <i>Tectorum</i> .                                                                        | Smooth succory, hawk-<br>weed, | Dry places.                               |

ARCTIUM.



| <i>Generic Names, &amp;c.</i> | <i>English Names.</i>   | <i>Habitations.</i>                      |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| ARCTIUM.                      | Burdock, clotbur.       | Near roads, and on cultivated fields.    |
| Sp. 1. <i>Lappa.</i>          |                         |                                          |
| SERRATULA.                    | Saw-wort, way-thistle.  | Among corn.                              |
| CARDUUS.                      | Corn-thistle.           | On cultivated and uncultivated ground.   |
| Sp. 1. <i>Lanceolatus.</i>    |                         |                                          |
| 2. <i>Nutans.</i>             |                         |                                          |
| 3. <i>Acanthoides.</i>        |                         |                                          |
| 4. <i>Crispus.</i>            |                         |                                          |
| TANACETUM.                    | Common tanfy.           | Dry and uncultivated places.             |
| Sp. 1. <i>Vulgare.</i>        |                         |                                          |
| ARTEMISIA.                    | Mugwort.                | In corn fields.                          |
| Sp. 1. <i>Vulgaris.</i>       |                         |                                          |
| GNAPHALIUM.                   | Cudweed, cat's-foot.    | Hills of Hoy, and in dry and wet places. |
| Sp. 1. <i>Dioicum.</i>        |                         |                                          |
| 2. <i>Alpinum.</i>            |                         |                                          |
| 3. <i>Uliginosum.</i>         |                         |                                          |
| TUSSILAGO.                    | Colts-foot, butter-bur. | In a cultivated clay soil.               |
| Sp. 1. <i>Farfara.</i>        |                         |                                          |
| 2. <i>Petasites.</i>          |                         |                                          |
| SENECIO.                      | Groundsell, ragwort.    | In many places.                          |
| Sp. 1. <i>Vulgaris.</i>       |                         |                                          |
| 2. <i>Jacobæa.</i>            |                         |                                          |
| 3. <i>Aquaticus.</i>          |                         |                                          |
| BELLIS.                       | Common daisy.           | Almost every where.                      |
| Sp. 1. <i>Perennis.</i>       |                         |                                          |
| CHRYSANTHEMUM.                | Corn-marygold, ox-eye.  | Among corn, and in pastures.             |
| Sp. 1. <i>Segetum.</i>        |                         |                                          |
| 2. <i>Leucanthemum.</i>       |                         |                                          |
| ANTHEMIS.                     | Stinking May-weed.      | Cultivated fields.                       |
| Sp. 1. <i>Cotula.</i>         |                         |                                          |
| ACHILLEA.                     | Mill-foil, sneeze-wort, |                                          |

Sp. 1.



| <i>Generic Names, &amp;c.</i>                     | <i>English Names.</i>        | <i>Habitations.</i>                   |
|---------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Sp. 1. <i>Millifolium.</i><br>2. <i>Ptarmica.</i> | goose-tongue.                | Dry places.                           |
| CENTAUREA.                                        | Blue-bottle.                 | Cultivated fields.                    |
| Sp. 1. <i>Cyanus.</i>                             |                              |                                       |
| VIOLA.                                            | Violet.                      | On wet banks and uncultivated fields. |
| Sp. 1. <i>Odorata.</i>                            |                              |                                       |
| IMPERATORIA.                                      | Martin-wort.                 | Waes and Hoy.                         |
| EQUISETUM.                                        | Horfe-tail.                  | In wet shady places.                  |
| Sp. 1. <i>Arvense.</i><br>2. <i>Fluviatile.</i>   |                              |                                       |
| POLYPODIUM.                                       | Polypodie, malefern.         | Dry uncultivated ground.              |
| Sp. 1. <i>Vulgare.</i>                            |                              |                                       |
| CAREX.                                            | Narrow-leaved, Cyprus-grafs. | Wet ground.                           |
| Sp. 1. <i>Acuta.</i>                              |                              |                                       |
| HOLCUS.                                           | Soft meadow grafs.           | Dry places.                           |
| Sp. 1. <i>Lanatus.</i>                            |                              |                                       |
| HORDEUM.                                          | Rye-grafs.                   | On both wet and dry places.           |
| Sp. 1. <i>Murinum.</i>                            |                              |                                       |
| JUNIPERUS.                                        | Juniper.                     | Dry uncultivated ground.              |
| LACTUCA.                                          | Wild lettuce.                | Dry uncultivated places.              |
| OSMUNDA.                                          | Moon-wort.                   | On the highest hills.                 |
| Sp. 1. <i>Lunaria.</i>                            |                              |                                       |
| MELAMPYRUM.                                       | Cow-wheat.                   | Pasture-ground.                       |
| Sp. 1. <i>Sylvaticum.</i>                         |                              |                                       |
| TEUCRIUM.                                         | Wood-sage.                   | Hard dry ground.                      |
| Sp. 1. <i>Scorodonia.</i>                         |                              |                                       |
| LAPSANA.                                          | Bur-reed.                    | In wet-ground.                        |
| Sp. 1. <i>Communis.</i>                           |                              |                                       |
| SEDUM.                                            | Orpine livelong.             | Common fields.                        |
| Sp. 1. <i>Telephium.</i>                          |                              |                                       |
| URTICA.                                           | Nettle.                      | In neglected spots.                   |
| Sp. 1. <i>Dioica.</i>                             |                              |                                       |

SALIX.



| <i>Generic Names, &amp;c.</i>                                                                                                                                                                          | <i>English Names.</i> | <i>Habitations.</i>                                          |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| SALIX.<br>Sp. 1. <i>Repens.</i><br>2. <i>Angustifolia.</i><br>3. <i>Latifolia.</i>                                                                                                                     | Willow.               | In some wet places.                                          |
| BETULA.                                                                                                                                                                                                | Birch.                | In Hoy, on the banks of rivulets.                            |
| SAMBUCUS.                                                                                                                                                                                              | Elder, bountree.      | On rills in Hoy.                                             |
| LYCHEN.<br>Sp. 1. <i>Pyxidatus.</i><br>2. <i>Saxatilis.</i>                                                                                                                                            | Liverwort.            | On rocks on the sea-shore.                                   |
| OPHIOGLOSSUM.<br>Sp. 1. <i>Vulgatum.</i>                                                                                                                                                               | Adder's tongue.       | Wet meadows.                                                 |
| ACROSTICHUM.<br>Sp. 1. <i>Septentrionale.</i>                                                                                                                                                          | Wall-rue, fork fern.  | Clefts of rocks.                                             |
| SPHAGNUM.<br>Sp. 1. <i>Palustre.</i>                                                                                                                                                                   | Bog-mofs.             | Wet places.                                                  |
| FUCUS.<br>Sp. 1. <i>Natans.</i><br>2. <i>Turbinatus.</i><br>3. <i>Serratus.</i><br>4. <i>Vesiculosus.</i><br>5. <i>Nodosus.</i><br>6. <i>Digitatus.</i><br>7. <i>Esulentus.</i><br>8. <i>Dentatus.</i> | Wrack, sea-weed.      | On the sea-shore, and under water, and above it alternately. |
| ULVA.<br>Sp. 1. <i>Umbilicalis.</i><br>2. <i>Intestinalis.</i><br>3. <i>Papilosa.</i>                                                                                                                  | Laver.                | In watery places.                                            |
| CONFERVA.<br>Sp. 1. <i>Fontinalis.</i><br>2. <i>Amphibia.</i><br>3. <i>Litoralis.</i>                                                                                                                  | River-weed.           | In flow running water.                                       |

AGARICUS.



| <u>Generic Names, &amp;c.</u>                                                                                                    | <u>English Names.</u> | <u>Habitations.</u>                                    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| AGARICUS.<br>Sp. 1. <i>Cantarellus</i> .<br>2. <i>Integer</i> .<br>3. <i>Dentatus</i> .                                          | Mushroom.             | In parks, or fields, that have been long uncultivated. |
| LYCOPERDON.<br>Sp. 1. <i>Bovista</i> .<br>2. <i>Stillatum</i> .                                                                  | Puff-ball.            | Dry uncultivated ground.                               |
| MUCOR.<br>Sp. 1. <i>Mucido</i> .<br>2. <i>Glaucus</i> .<br>3. <i>Gespitosus</i> .                                                | Mould.                | On rotten wood, and on decayed vegetables.             |
| ORCHIS.<br>Sp. 1. <i>Mascula</i> .<br>2. <i>Morio</i> .<br>3. <i>Latifolia</i> .<br>4. <i>Maculata</i> .<br>5. <i>Conopsea</i> . | Foolstones.           | In wet meadows.                                        |
| SATYRIUM.<br>Sp. 1. <i>Albidum</i> .                                                                                             | Lizard flower.        | Meadows in the hills of Hoy.                           |
| OPHRYS.<br>Sp. 1. <i>Cordata</i> .                                                                                               | Ivy-blade.            | In a valley of Hoy.                                    |
| ZOSTERA.<br>Sp. 1. <i>Marina</i> .                                                                                               | Grass-wrack.          | Thrown on the sea-shore.                               |
| SCHOENUS.                                                                                                                        | Marsh bog-rush.       | In marshy ground.                                      |
| LIGUSTICUM.<br>Sp. 1. <i>Scoticum</i> .                                                                                          | Lovage.               | On the sea-shores.                                     |
| HERACLEUM.<br>Sp. 1. <i>Sphondylium</i> .                                                                                        | Cow-parsnip.          | Meadows and fields.                                    |
| OXALIS.<br>Sp. 1. <i>Acetofella</i> .                                                                                            | Wood sorrel.          | Calf of the island of Flota.                           |



These are the plants that have hitherto been observed to be indigenous; and when it is considered that there may be still many that have eluded research, and that many, not yet mentioned, are raised for utility or ornament, their variety will appear very considerable.

Leaving the former to the vigilance of future inquiry, we shall take a view of the latter, which will be found not very different from those met with in similar situations in other parts of the kingdom. Bear or bigg, and oats, are the kinds of grain most commonly raised, to which are sometimes added peas, beans, wheat, rye, and flax, by some of our most spirited and enterprising gentlemen farmers. The same description of farmers also raise, with effect, tares, saintfoin, lucern, as summer food for the cattle; and cabbage and turnip for winter food. They have also frequently rich crops of the different sorts of clover and rye-grass for hay or for pasture.

The productions of the gardens are not materially different from those in the south of Scotland. In the flower-garden, the rose, the tulip, the carnation, the pink, the primrose, with a multitude of other flowers, are cultivated with success; while the kitchen-garden produces cabbage, brocoli, cauliflower, peas, beans, spinage, onions, leeks, parsley, cresses, beets, lettuces, turnips, carrots, parsnips, cellery, and artichokes; all of which are good of their kind, but particularly the last is of unrivalled excellence.

The fruit garden, though it produces, in abundance, excellent black, white, and red currants, is very inferior in the apples, pears, plumbs, cherries, gooseberries, and strawberries that it produces, with respect both to size and flavour.

There are no trees in the islands at present, except a few in Hoy; which, on account of their stunted growth and diminutive size, scarcely merit the name; and some of larger dimensions that are met with in the gardens in Kirkwall. This would by no means appear so surprising, were it not evident that they existed formerly, not in one or two spots only, but in many different places through this country. There is a general and strong tradition, that the harbour of Otterwick in Sanday was once a forest, which was destroyed by an inundation. In support of which tradition,



dition, it may be observed, that roots, or at least parts of trees, much putrified, half buried in the sand, and covered with sea-weed, present themselves to view at the low-water of spring-tides. Deerness is also reported to have been anciently a considerable forest, which a deluge overwhelmed, after it had long been the haunt of deers and other wild animals. To confirm this tradition, we have the decided testimony of an author who himself 1529. lived, for some time, at least, in this country \*.

Another author †, who was also resident here, and lived a hundred and 1683. fifty years later than the former, has given his testimony that many of the peat mosses through the islands in his time, contained the *salix humilis latifolia*, and that near Campstone, on the south of Deersound, 'there was ' then a little wood, about two butts in length, and one in breadth,' consisting of trees or shrubs, of the height of a man, and of the kind that are known by the name of the *salix viminea* or *angustifolia*.

But though no such tradition had ever existed, or been supported by such authority, the number of trees that have, in many places, been occasionally dug up in the peat mosses, from the thickness of a man's leg to that of his body, furnish sufficient evidence of their having been once pretty general in these Islands.

Since, then, it must be admitted that wood in considerable quantity grew here in a former period, and that the Islands are now entirely stripped of that beneficial ornament, an inquiry into the cause becomes, if not a matter of consequence, at least of some curiosity. Among the earliest inhabitants of most countries, wood seems to have been the only original fuel; turf or peat succeeded; and coal, which, comparatively speaking, is only a late discovery, was long subsequent to both in its application to domestic use. In whatever places, therefore, woods are on the decline, or wherever they have disappeared totally, it may have been owing to their having been cut down and made use of for this purpose.

\* Ben. MSS. Adv. Lib. Edin. Deerness, quasi, the ness of deers: hæc parochia olim erat memorosa, et multæ feræ hic fuere, tandem diluviis vehementibus, arbores, vulvis radicibus, submersæ sunt.

† Mathew Mackaile apothecary at Aberdeen's Short Relation of the most considerable things in Orkney. MS. Adv. Lib. Edin.



To this cause may be added others, in their nature, perhaps, not less powerful. Woods may have been expended in the building of boats and other small craft, or in furnishing implements of husbandry; storms, in their fury, may have thrown them down; and inundations (as of old in the island of Sanday) may have buried them far beyond the reach of human inspection; and, besides all these, there may, perhaps, be somewhat in the air of a country under cultivation inimical to trees.

But, whatever may have been the causes that contributed to this effect, wood now becomes an object of such importance, from the increased demand for it, its high price, and scarcity, that every attempt to raise it anew must be considered as laudable. Several attempts have already been made; but, as they have been, in some cases, and in some measure, unsuccessful, an opinion has become prevalent that no kind of wood will ever thrive in the Orkney Islands. This conclusion, however, it is apprehended, is unfounded; as the experiments, that in general have hitherto been made, have neither been conducted with care, nor undertaken with a proper regard to circumstances. In proof of this, we may observe, that, in place of choosing a situation in which trees could be sheltered from the violence of the blast, or fenced against the destructive inroads of sheep, swine, and black cattle, and without sufficient attention to select such species as were best adapted to the nature of the climate, a few plants have been imported from the south, and put into the earth, and little or no farther care bestowed on them. The consequence has often been such as was naturally to be expected. They have, for the most part, struck root, put forth leaves, and, for a little, made a promising appearance; till they were either cropt by cattle, choked with weeds, blasted by the sea, or withered by the violence of the weather.

In order to decide the point, whether trees will grow in Orkney, as they have, without doubt, done formerly, the seeds of such as are fit for the climate should be chosen; these seeds should be sown and the plants raised in a nursery in the Islands, taken up when they are of strength sufficient to stand the weather, transplanted into a soil, not only fit for them, but properly prepared, in a sheltered situation, and under a good fence, in such numbers as to screen them from the cold, and their roots cleared  
occasionally



occasionally of the weeds that may spring up to impede their vegetation. If a plan of this kind were adopted, and such precautions used, there is a high degree of probability that trees, both useful and ornamental, might be raised successfully in this country. But if, even in these favourable circumstances, the attempt did not succeed, the result would at least serve to convince us, that future endeavours to plant here would be unavailing, and that to persist in them would be to incur certain expence and final disappointment. The proprietors have such an interest in the matter, as should induce them speedily to make the experiment; and, if they have any predilection for their native soil, it should stimulate their exertions; as there are few countries in the north that would furnish more enchanting prospects than this, were the barren parts clothed with wood, and the improveable spots converted into corn and grass fields.

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### SECTION III.

## ZOOLOGY.

THE LOBSTER, (*cancer gammarus*, Lin. Syst. Nat.) on account of its superior excellence, is justly entitled to the first place in the lowest order. Around almost all our rocky shores, these fishes are caught in the summer months, in a depth of water from two to six fathoms, during the night commonly, or, if in the day, only in dark weather. The nets made use of for this purpose are in the form of bags, fixed to iron hoops of about two feet and a half diameter, with pieces of lead to sink them, baited with fish, flesh, or garbage of any kind, which the lobsters devour with the utmost avidity. As soon as they are caught, their claws are bound with twine, to prevent their maiming or killing each other; and they are put into large chests, which are anchored in the water in bays or harbours, where



where they lye unmolested, till put on board the smacks that carry them, in their wells, alive, weekly, in thousands, to the London market.

The CRAB, (*cancer pagurus*, Lin. Syft. Nat.) is a species of fish which is found in great plenty in almost all the rocky shores in this country. They are caught with the hand, or with a hook, with which they are drawn from their lurking places, and only in fine weather. Those that are found here are of an excellent quality. They are carried to no regular market; but are either consumed by the people in the Islands, or disposed of to gentlemens' families.

The COCKLE, (*cardium*, Lin. Syft.) is a fish in much greater repute here than in most other places. The species abound in almost all our sandy bays and shores, where they are caught with rakes, in the sand, at low-water; and, in the spring and summer season, in such numbers, as to make an article of food, which is considered pleasantly delicate, as well as nourishing.

The RAZOR, (*solen*, Lin. Syft.) or, as we name it, the *spout-fish*, is also found in sandy places; but the species is far from being so numerous as the former. The shell, which is a bivalve, has some faint resemblance to mother of pearl in its structure; and in its form, to the instrument from which it derives its name; and the fish it contains is by some reckoned excellent, while others consider it as food of very inferior quality.

The OYSTER, (*ostrea*, Lin. Syft.) is found in several places, but especially in the bays of Frith and of Deersound, and is inferior to none even in Britain, which, for many centuries past, has been justly famed for the excellence of this production. If our oysters, or their spat or spawn, were raised from their native beds, and, in places fit for the purpose, treated as they are at the mouth of the Thames, or at Colchester, there is little doubt of their both increasing in number, and improving in quality, so much, that they would not only furnish a delicious repast to the epicure, but prove a lucrative article of commerce.

The SAUREY, (Pennant's Tour Scot. 1769) though not a native of this place, claims some attention; as vast numbers of the species were driven, some years ago, into the harbour of Stromness, where the seamen saw them, and gave them the name of *Garfish*, such as they had seen on

the



the coast of America. Their body was of a slender make, of between nine and twelve inches in length; their bill was horny, and somewhat resembled that of a bird, divided into two mandibles; their backs were of a dark green, and their bellies of a silver colour. They were caught in myriads.

The GREY GURNARD (*trigla gurnardus*, Lin. Syst.) is caught by seamen on our coasts, by hanging a line and baited hook over the stern of their vessels, at which this fish bites very readily, especially if the wind blow strong; and it is no sooner hauled on board, than it begins to utter a croaking, plaintive noise, something like that of an angry person.

The DRAGONET (*callionymus lyra*, Lin. Syst.) has also been found here (though seldom) entangled among the sea-weed. The body of one specimen was only six inches long, and of a conical form; the head was large; the pectoral and belly fins large also; and what clearly distinguished it from the whole tribe of our fishes, is the length of the first ray of the dorsal fin, which reaches to the tail of the animal.

HERRING, (*clupea heringus*, Lin. Syst.) in the months of July and August, not only pay an annual visit to our coasts, as might have been expected from our situation in the track of the great northern shoal, but enter into and continue for some time in our bays, creeks, and friths; and depart unmolested; as we are either destitute of time, capital, or industry, to avail ourselves of this inexhaustible treasure.

The ARGENTINE, (*argentina sphyraena*, Lin. Syst.) that beautiful little fish, has been seen here, though rarely; and the specimen obtained was caught among the sea-weed, on the reflux of the tide. The whole length of the body was not above an inch, the back was of a greenish hue, the belly of a silver colour, the fins soft, and the tail somewhat membranous.

The GRAYLING (*salmo thymallus*, Lin. Syst.) which is from about twelve to eighteen inches long, in our seas, is caught very frequently with the fly, to which it rises very readily. It swims quickly, leaps much; and to draw it when it has taken the bait, requires much dexterity.

The CHAR (*salmo alpinus*, Lin. Syst.) has been very seldom met with here, except in a few instances in the Loch of Stennis, where it is easily distin-



distinguished from all the other trout by the beautiful red colour that ornaments its belly.

The PAR (*samlet*, Brit. Zool.) is frequently seen in clear brooks and in lochs that are limpid and shallow, though not in such numbers as are often met with in other countries. It seldom exceeds six inches in length. It is distinguished by a row of bluish spots on each side.

The TROUT (*salmo fario*, Lin. Syst.) frequents all our rivulets in great plenty, but seldom grows to a great size, unless sometimes in the lochs and larger streams, where it is said to have been found so large as to weigh between twenty or thirty pounds, and even upwards.

The BULL TROUT (*salmo trutta*, Lin. Syst.) is a species that is found in great numbers in the Loch of Stennis; but as the flesh is white and dry, and of consequence unpleasant, it is seldom sought after.

The SALMON (*salmo salax*, Lin. Syst.) is by no means plentiful in Orkney. This, no doubt, is in some measure owing to our want of rivers, but still more to the want of exertion in our people, who might certainly catch many of them, were they vigilant at the season during which this species is well known to frequent the bays, the mouths of brooks, and the entrance of lochs, in search of fresh water for the purpose of spawning.

The MACKREL (*scomber scomber*, Lin. Syst.) is a species that, in large shoals, visits our coasts and our bays in the end of July or first of August. Our indolent fishermen, however, seldom catch any of them, unless they come in their way by mere accident.

The FIFTEEN-SPINED STICKLEBACK (*gasterosteus spinachia*, Lin. Syst.) which is here denominated the *bismer*, from the resemblance it is supposed to bear to the weighing instrument of that name, is frequently found in all our seas, in considerable numbers; but, on account of the little estimation in which it is held, it is seldom sought after.

The THREE-SPINED STICKLEBACK (*gasterosteus aculeatus*, Lin. Syst.) which we distinguish by the name of *bansticle*, is found in every small running brook or loch that has any communication with another piece of fresh water.

The



The WRASSE (*labrus tinca*, Lin. Syft.) that has here got the name of *bergle*, frequents such of our shores as have high rocks and deep water, where it is very often found in company with what we call the *red-ware cod*. The *wraffe* is not considered as a fish of great value. They are caught in small numbers, and roasted fresh, for the use of the table.

The TURBOT (*pleuronectes maximus*, Lin. Syft.) is undoubtedly sometimes caught on our coasts, though but rarely; as only a few specimens have been procured; and holibut, a very different kind of fish, generally passes under that name.

The SOLE (*pleuronectes solea*, Lin. Syft.) is a species caught in the bay of Skail, and in many other similar situations; where it is easily distinguished from the rest of the genus, by the narrowness of its body, in proportion to its length, and by the superiority of its taste and flavour.

The FLOUNDER (*pleuronectes flesus*, Lin. Syft.) is a very common species and frequent in all our bays, creeks, and inlets, especially where the ground is flat and sandy. They are caught sometimes with a fork or such like sharp instrument, and sometimes in the net, partly in the lower parts of the Loch of Stennis; and they weigh generally from half a pound to two or three pounds.

The PLAISE, (*pleuronectes platessa*, Lin. Syft.) which with us is not very large, for the most part frequents sandy banks, and ground with a muddy bottom, such as the banks and the head of the bay of Kerston, or harbour of Stromness, the bay of Skail, and other similar places.

The HOLIBUT, (*pleuronectes hippoglossus*, Lin. Syft.) which is generally known by the name of *turbot*, abounds in all our seas; but is most commonly found in eddies, or places where two or more tides meet; which, perhaps, that large flat-bodied fish haunts, in order to secure itself from the force of the current. It is hard and dry, and by no means excellent, nor indeed is any part of it pleasant eating, except the head and the bones, which by many are esteemed both nourishing and palatable.

The OPAH or KING'S FISH (Pennant's Brit. Zool.) seems to be so rare in other parts of the kingdom, that only five instances of it had occurred to the British Pliny about twenty years ago. Here, however, it is much more common; for as many, and perhaps more of the species have been



found in the bays or on the shores of the island of Sanday, even so early as before the end of the seventeenth century. From some one or more of these that description was taken which we meet with in the works of Sir Robert Sibbald, and in Dr. Wallace's Account of the Isles of Orkney. To these may be added several that have been either caught or driven ashore lately, some of them in the island above mentioned, and others in the Mainland, and particularly in the bays of Scapa and Kirkwall. Though they all differed a little in shape, and somewhat more in colour and dimensions, they were evidently of the same species, and agreed in so many particulars as is sufficient to afford ground for a general description.

The body, which was nearly three feet long, and two broad, and from side to side about five or six inches in thickness, swelled toward the middle, and tapered to the extremities, so as to exhibit the form of two segments of a circle united together. The head is small, with large eyes; and the tail is slender and forked. Toward the back were a number of oval spots, of a silvery brightness, on a ground of vivid green, which, on approaching the belly, changed imperceptibly into a golden yellow; and these hues were much increased in brilliancy, by the lustre of the fins and tail, which were of a deep scarlet colour.

The FATHERLASHER (*cottus scorpius*, Lin. Syst.) or, as it is here named, the *comper*, is found in every pool into which the sea regularly flows, lurking under stones and the points of rocks, to devour the small fishes. By some, this fish is reckoned delicate eating; and such as can be reconciled to its horrid appearance sometimes prefer it to many others that are more beautiful.

The BLACK GOBY, (*gobius niger*, Lin. Syst.) which is sometimes mentioned under the name of the *black rock fishick*, is often seen in the deep holes about the point of the Ness of Stromness, of a size that seldom exceeds three or four inches, and of a black or brownish colour.

The SPOTTED GOBY (*gobias aphya*, Lin. Syst.) is met with in the same or similar places with the former.

The VIVIPAROUS BLENNY, (*blennius viviparus*, Lin. Syst.) which, from the colour of the back-bone, has here got the name of *greenbone*, is found



under stones and among the sea-weed at low-water mark, in vast numbers, from six to ten inches in length, but not proportionally thick.

The SPOTTED BLENNY, (*blennius gunnellus*, Lin. Syft.) which, from the form of its body, has here got the name of *swordick*, is found under stones, among the sea-weed both at low-water mark and above it. The species is numerous, and might be caught in great plenty; but they are a coarse fish, and seldom eaten, or even used for bait, unless when the fishermen can obtain no better.

The PURPLE BLENNY is also an inhabitant of our seas; and, in its shape, its manner of life, and its haunts, bears such a striking resemblance to the former, that it may perhaps be considered as a variety.

The TORSK, or, as it is here named, the *tusk* or *catfish*, is an inhabitant of the north seas, and hitherto undiscovered lower than this country; and, even here, it is very seldom met with, in comparison of what it is around the coast of Shetland. It is caught, however, sometimes here, off the burgh of Birsay, Westray, and Sanday; and perhaps in several other places. It is superior to all our fish in its greater fitness for curing. Its length is about two feet, its greatest depth four and a half, or five inches; the head is small in proportion to the body; the upper jaw a little longer than the lower; both jaws furnished with a number of small teeth; and on the chin there is a small single beard. From the head to the dorsal fin is a deep furrow; the dorsal fin begins within six inches of the tip of the nose, and extends almost to the tail; the pectoral fins are small and rounded; and the ventral short, thick, and fleshy, terminating in four points.

The WHISTLE FISH (*gadus mustela*, Lin. Syft.) or, as it is here named, the *red-ware fishick*, is a species very often found under the stones among the sea-weed, seldom exceeding nine or ten inches in length, and, for the most part, in company with the blennies. Though small, it is an excellent fish for the table, were it caught in any considerable number; which it is not, as the hook is not made use of for that purpose, but only the hand, by turning over the stones at low-water.

The LING (*gadus molva*, Lin. Syft.) is, next to the coal, cod-fish, and haddock, the most common in all our coasts, and, like them too, it is very



much neglected, equally to our loss and disgrace. If the fishing of that excellent and useful species were prosecuted with the same skill and assiduity as it is by our enterprising and intelligent neighbours in Shetland, it might be the means of both exciting and employing industry, and, besides, prove the source of great wealth. The few that are caught at present are taken with what are called the long-lines, or lines with several hundred hooks on each. These the fishermen bait and set in the evening, draw next day, and set again in the evening as before.

The WHITING, (*gadus merlangus*, Lin. Syst.) though rare, must be allowed a place among our fishes; as it is caught sometimes, and even in considerable numbers, especially when the haddocks are on the coasts in plenty.

The POLLACK, (*gadus pollachus*, Lin. Syst.) with us named the *lyth*, or *ly-fish*, is frequently caught close by the shore, almost among the wrack or ware, in deep holes among the rocks, gamboling about in a frolicksome manner, and furnishes an excellent dish for the table.

The COALFISH, (*gadus carbonarius*, Lin. Syst.) which is so well known here by the name of the *fellock*, *cuth*, or *seth*, according as the age of it is either one or two or more years, is much more abundant than any other, and, indeed, exceeds in number almost all the rest of our fish taken together. The fry of this species appear first in May, when they are small in size, and few in number. In August, they increase considerably in both respects; but towards winter when the seas begin to be stormy, they rush into, and often occupy, most of our bays in which they are caught in myriads, for their livers, which furnish oil for the lamps, and their fish, that constitutes an extensive and valuable article of food to the poor people.

The HADDOCK, (*gadus aeglefinus*, Lin. Syst.) is a species which is far from being in such plenty as the former, nor does it seem to make this place its constant abode. In their migrations, they visit us only occasionally, at all seasons, and are caught on both the east and west coast in great excellence. Many more of these valuable fish might be procured, were the people possessed of vigilant industry, in which, though they be very deficient,



cient, this very summer fifteen thousand, of a very fine, large kind, were taken daily, for the space of ten days, off the south-east headland of the island of Shapinsay.

The CODFISH (*gadus morhua*, Lin. Syft.) is found in multitudes on all the banks around our coasts, which are pretty numerous; and it presents an immense treasure to the indolence of the people, by whom, at present at least, it seems to be regarded with indifference. This, it is hoped, will not be the case long, nor has it been so formerly, as boats were once stationed at Waes, Græmsay, Birsay, and some other places, the sole employment of which was, to fish cod, which were cured here, and thence carried to the market, to the no small emolument of those engaged in the business.

The LAUNCE, (*ammodytes tobianus*, Lin. Syft.) that from its mode of life, or place of residence, has here the name of the *sand-eel*, is a beautiful little fish, and may be found in the heaps of sand collected by the tides, where that species, in great numbers, commonly bury themselves. There they are sometimes caught, but not often, as they are not much valued, which is the more surprising, as they are useful for bait, and excellent for the table.

The WOLF-FISH, (*anarhichas lupus*, Lin. Syft.) here the *swine-fish*, an ugly animal, is often found in our seas, and sometimes thrown ashore by the violence of the surge in stormy weather. The mouth of this fish is furnished with the most dreadful weapons. Its jaws have broad and strong grinders; its fore teeth are long, sharp and conical; and even the roof of the mouth is not destitute of teeth.

The CONGER, (*muræna conger*, Lin. Syft.) which is about six feet long, and one in circumference, frequents the seas around these isles, where it is often caught by lines set for other fishes, but much oftener by the otter, which drags it ashore, devours a part, and leaves the remainder to be picked up by carrion birds, or carried off by the country people.

The COMMON EEL (*muræna anguilla*, Lin. Syft.) is to be met with in all our brooks, lochs, and in the seas, and, at certain seasons, in great plenty in the harbour of Stromness. The size is never large, seldom exceeding



ceeding two feet and a half in length, and its thickness is in proportion. The skin, which is of a tenacious nature, is stripped off, and worn to prevent the cramp; but the fish itself, though excellent food, is seldom brought to the table, on account of some aversion which the people have to it.

The LITTLE PIPE FISH, (*syngnathus ophidion*, Lin. Syst.) though frequently found under stones, between high and low-water mark, is in no esteem with us, as it is never used as an article of food; and the coat of mail with which it is covered, prevents its being used as bait to advantage.

The SHORTER PIPE-FISH (*syngnathus acus*, Lin. Syst.) is also in great plenty, and of very different dimensions, from six to fifteen and a half inches.

The LONGER PIPE-FISH (*syngnathus barbarus*, Lin. Syst.) is also a native of this place, and very frequent in our seas: it has a body about the size of a quill, and the medium length of it is not above twelve inches.

The SEA SNAIL (*cyclopterus liparis*, Lin. Syst.) is found lying under stones around the shores in many places, and may be picked up in great numbers, of about four inches long, and many of them smaller.

The LUMP FISH, (*cyclopterus lumpus*, Lin. Syst.), here denominated the *Paddle*, frequents the harbours and sand-banks, where, if it could serve any useful purpose, it might be caught with the utmost ease and readiness. This fish has a hollow under its pectoral fins, by which it adheres so firmly to the stones or other substances to which it fixes itself, that even a very considerable force applied, removes it with difficulty.

The STURGEON (*acipenser sturio*, Lin. Syst.) is admitted into the catalogue of our fishes, not because it has been recently seen or described, but on the authority of some authors, who assert that some of the species have been repeatedly driven ashore; from which circumstance, they conclude them to be natives of this region.

The LESSER DOG-FISH (*squalus catulus*, Lin. Syst.), which is here named the *daw-fish*, is caught in small quantities on our coasts; but, like others of the same genus, seems to be migratory, though they remain so long as to be



be caught in single fish through almost the whole summer. They are neither much valued for food nor oil.

The WHITE SHARK (*squalus carcharias*, Lin. Syst.), has sometimes been seen, and has also been driven ashore in some places. This fish sometimes makes great destruction among the nets.

The BASKING SHARK, (*squalus maximus*, Lin. Syst.), which has here got the name of the *boe-mother*, or *bomer*, that is the mother of the dog-fish, is the most common of the larger shark kind that is observed around these islands. He is often seen rushing violently through the deep, and even sometimes entering our creeks and bays. One of twenty-two feet long, and sixteen in circumference, was about thirty years ago killed in the harbour of Stromness.

The PIKED DOG-FISH (*squalus acanthias*, Lin. Syst.), here known by the name of the *boe*, frequently visits our coasts; and, during the short time it continues, generally drives off every other kind of fishes. The name which it bears is derived from two sharp spines that are placed before the dorsal fins, which are a sort of weapons of defence that it can use with much dexterity. The fish is dried or cured for food to the poor. The liver yields a large quantity of oil for their lamps, and bait in plenty is obtained from the garbage.

The THORNBACK (*raia clavata*, Lin. Syst.) is a species in such plenty, that it is among the most common captures every where, but particularly in the eddies, or places where two or more currents meet. It takes its name from the thorn-like prickles with which its back is planted.

The SHARP-NOSED RAY (*raia oxyrinchus*, Lin. Syst.) is also an inhabitant of our bays and shores; and, in common with rays of every shape and dimension, is here called a *skate*, or *thornback*, the young of which, while small, are styled *maidens*.

The SKATE, (*raia batis*, Lin. Syst.) in great variety of sizes, from one to four, or even five feet in diameter, is caught in considerable numbers in almost all the seas around us. A few are used fresh; most of them are dried; and such as are not too large, are esteemed fittest for the table.

The GRAMPUS (*delphinus orca*, Lin. Syst.) is seen in great numbers on most of our coasts, and very often in strong and impetuous currents, frisking and tumbling about in a strange and amusing manner. Their size is from



from fifteen to twenty, or even twenty-five feet in length, and they are very thick in proportion. Their appetite is so voracious, and their nature so fierce, that they do not hesitate to attack the largest fishes, which is probably the reason that so many whales are embayed, driven ashore, and destroyed in these islands.

The PROPESSÉ (*delphinus phocaena*, Lin. Syst.) is a species that, during the months of May, June, July, and part of August, is often seen in our seas, in herds of a hundred or upwards; sometimes in search of their prey, and, in the love season, as often in pursuit of their females. These fish are migratory, as they visit us regularly when the cold season is over, but are never seen in winter; and, as they have been observed to resemble swine in their internal structure, so they are here said to resemble them, in being so much guided by example, that if one of their number be, by any means, forced ashore, the rest will readily follow him.

The HIGH-FINNED CACHALOT (*physeter turso*, Lin. Syst.) appears, sometimes at least, to frequent our seas, as one of that kind was, according to Sir Robert Sibbald, driven ashore in the year 1687. This fish was a large female, the spout-hole in the front, the head eight or nine feet high, with teeth only in the lower jaw. It had two pectoral fins, and one in the middle of the back, like the mizen-mast of a ship, and the head was full of the best sort of spermaceti.

The ROUND-HEADED CACHALOT (*physeter catodon*, Lin. Syst.) is another species, a hundred and two of which, the same author informs us, were thrown ashore in the harbour of Kairston, now Stromness, the largest twenty-four feet long, some eighteen, some fifteen, and the smallest twelve. He does not seem to know whether they had spout-holes, or if their heads contained spermaceti; but it is probable that they had both, as all the known whales of that genus, that frequent the British seas, are possessed of them.

The GREAT-HEADED CACHALOT, (*physeter microps*, Lin. Syst.) which is here called the *Spermaceti whale*, is pretty frequently thrown ashore, and even sometimes killed, on the coast; as happened, some years ago, with one of about fifty feet long, in Hoy sound. The oil is obtained by melting and refining a thick layer of spick, or fat, that lies immediately under the skin, and the spermaceti by opening its skull.

The



The BEAKED WHALE, (*nebbe-baal*, Pontop. Norway.) which is here known by the name of the *Bottlenoe*, is a species that is often thrown ashore in considerable numbers, of different sizes, from eighteen to ten feet in length, and seems to be migratory, as it appears sometimes plenty, and again leaves us for a number of years; making us no regular visits, like the porpessé, and some other fishes.

The ROUND-LIPPED WHALE (*balæna musculus*, Lin. Syft.) is much more frequently seen here than the others, especially in the months of July and August, when the seas and founds are full of herring, on which it seems to depend in a great measure for subsistence. Two of that species were thrown ashore some years ago, the one in Hoy, and the other in Flotay, the length of which was not less than fifty feet; their lips were very thick; their mouth was large, and contained a quantity of excellent whalebone.

The COMMON WHALE (*balæna mysticetus*, Lin. Syft.) is an animal of vast size; which, though formerly often seen in this place, seems now in a great measure to have taken its leave of us; being perhaps forced, by the greater resort of shipping, to the northern latitudes, where vast numbers of them are killed annually. Some of them, however, have occasionally been put ashore; but they were generally so lean and sickly, as to prove only of very inconsiderable value.

Of reptiles, the FROG is the only genus that can be considered as an inhabitant of this place. REPTILES.

The COMMON FROG (*rana temporaria*, Lin. Syft.) may be seen very frequently in lochs, and pools of dirty water, where it deposits its spawn, which soon afterwards assumes the form of animalcules, making their way through the water, by means of the undulatory motion of their tails, which are membranous. Their shape, while tadpoles, is a flatted hemisphere, or rather an ellipse, in one end of which is the tail, and in the other the eyes and mouth. In this state they continue for some time, till the fore feet begin to appear, and the tail being no longer useful, drops off, and the new formed animal becomes amphibious. The small number of frogs, that appear in comparison of the number of tadpoles, may be partly



owing to the very cold weather that we have in spring, and partly to the great number of tame ducks and geese about almost every house, which may perhaps devour the tadpoles.

The TOAD (*rana bufo*, Lin. Syft.) is sometimes seen in the evenings in gardens, and in such like places, crawling, but never leaping, as the frog does; and is of an appearance, which, to most people, is not only ugly in the extreme, but even frightful and disgusting. Hence perhaps the opinion that has very generally prevailed, that this reptile is pernicious, and has either by its bite, its saliva, or some other means, sometimes transfused its poison into men, as well as other animals. But this opinion is neither supported by the structure of the animal, as it appears on dissection, nor yet by the instances that are adduced, as they have never been confirmed by respectable testimony; so that we are warranted to conclude that the toad is perfectly harmless; to which we may, consistently with truth, add, that there is no venomous creature, above the size of an insect, to be found through the whole of these Islands.

## BIRDS.

As this country lies in a high northern latitude, in the tract between the old and the new continent, in the immediate vicinity of Britain, at no great distance from Ireland and Iceland, and much nearer the Ferroses, Shetland, and the Western Isles; and as we have some marshes, and plenty of locks, partially covered with grass, and many high and precipitous rocks and solitary holms, as well as some hills and valleys; the variety, no less than the number of our birds, must, it is evident, be very considerable. To each species, therefore, only a very little room can be afforded, as it is our intention to omit none, whether permanent or migratory, that have been sufficiently ascertained to inhabit these Islands.

Our domestic birds are the cock and hen, ducks and geese in great numbers, turkies, and even sometimes peacocks, which are reared for pleasure about gentlemen's houses.

The TUMSTONE or SEA DOTTEREL (*charadrius morinellus*, Lin. Syft.) is found in small flocks on our shores, but only in winter; and, as soon as spring arrives, it takes its departure to the northward, like most other birds that leave us in summer.

The



The COOT, (*fulica atra*, Lin. Syft.), which we call the *Snyth*, remains with us the whole year, and is found in several places, but particularly at Burwick, in South Ronaldshay, and Aikerness in Evie, where it builds in grassy lochs, in which it delights to conceal itself.

The GANNET, (*pelecanus bassanus*, Lin. Syft.), which has here got the name of the *Solan*, or *Soland-goose*, frequents our bays, and fishes in a very peculiar manner. The birds of this species do not breed here; but many of them do on the Stark of Suliskerry, a holm or uninhabited island, a little to the south-west of this country.

The SHAG, (*pelecanus graculus*, Lin. Syft.), so well known by the name of *Scarf*, is very frequently seen with us in both fresh and salt water, catching fish, which it devours in great numbers.

The CORMORANT, or CORVORANT, (*pelecanus carbo*, Lin. Syft.), our great *Scarf*, is a species not so numerous as the former, but like it in most respects except in size, which is much greater. Both of them are of a black colour, build on rocks, live on fish, and remain with us constantly.

The GOLDEN EYE (*anas clangula*, Lin. Syft.) is seen here only in winter, and in flocks of about a dozen: it is easily distinguished from all the duck kind by its bill, which has a white spot at each of its corners.

The TEAL (*anas crecca*, Lin. Syft.) continues in this place the whole year; builds in marshy or wet ground, often in rush bushes; and is a very beautiful bird, of which our *Atteal* is perhaps only a variety.

The GARGANNY (*anas querquedula*, Lin. Syft.) is frequently seen in our lochs when the weather is mild, and in the sea when it is stormy: it is migratory.

The WIGEON (*anas penelope*, Lin. Syft.) is pretty often seen here; but whether resident or migratory is as yet a matter of uncertainty. The species choose for their favourite haunt the loch of Skail, in company with many of the duck kind, which resort thither to live on eels, the larva of the ephemera, and pond-weed, which grows there in great plenty.

The SWALLOW-TAILED SHIELDRAKE (*anas glacialis*, Lin. Syft.) is the constant inhabitant of our fresh water lochs, from its arrival in October, till the month of April, when it departs for the summer.



The PINTAIL DUCK, (*anas acuta*, Lin. Syst.), which has here got the name of the *caloo*, or *coal and candle light*, from the sound it utters, is often seen in different places through the winter; but on the return of spring it departs for some other country.

The MALLARD, (*anas boschas*, Lin. Syst.), our *stockduck*, is a pretty numerous species, which builds in marshes, meadows, and holms, through all the Islands.

The SHIELDRAKE, (*anas tadorna*, Lin. Syst.), which is here, on account of its habits, named the *fly-goose*, is the most beautiful of the genus found in this country. In spring it arrives and builds in the holes of the earth, very often in such as had been dug up and occupied by rabbits, and when the breeding season is over, it retires, perhaps to a warmer climate.

The TUFTED DUCK, (*anas fuligula*, Lin. Syst.), is not an inhabitant of this place, nor does it even make us a transient visit, unless when compelled by the violence of a storm; in that case, it leaves us again with the very first favourable weather.

The EIDER DUCK, (*anas mollissima*, Lin. Syst.), which is our *dunter goose*, frequents all our sounds and bays in winter, and leaves us in the spring, with the exception of a few, that breed in the holm of Papay-Westray, where they form their nests of sea-weed, and pluck the rich soft down from their own breasts to line them.

The BRENT GOOSE, (*anas bernicla*, Lin. Syst.) known with us by the name of *hora-goose*, is sometimes seen in Hoy and Deerfound in winter, the only season of its appearance; and as it has not been particularly examined, we can only mention it as a large grey bird, with a black head and a hoarse cry.

The BERNACLE (*anas erythropus*, Lin. Syst.), makes its appearance here sometimes in the spring; probably in its passage northwards, as it does not seem to breed in this country. This bird was formerly believed to be sprung from a fish (*lepas anatifera*, Lin.) the shell of which is frequently driven ashore in this place, adhering to wood, tangles, and such like substances.

The GOOSE (*anas anser*, Lin. Syst.) in its wild state is not very often met with; but the tame are bred in such numbers, that every little farmer rears a flock on which he partly subsists, and with which he pays some



part of his rent annually. They are of an excellent kind; much valued for the table when fresh; and, when salted and smoked, which they often are, they make an article in our exports, as is the case also with their quills and feathers, that are still more valuable.

The WILD SWAN (*anas cygnus*, Lin. Syst.) is found here in all seasons, as some of them certainly build with us; but these are few, in comparison of the great number that visit us in October from the north, and remain with us through the whole winter.

The GOOSANDER (*mergus merganser*, Lin. Syst.), the *harle* of this country, remains with us constantly, and may be seen every day in the lochs, and in the sea: it builds in the small holms in the loch of Stennis, in autumn; in winter, it flies in large flocks, but pairs in the breeding season.

The STORMFINCH (*procellaria pelagica*, Lin. Syst.), our *alamonti*, is very frequently seen in the friths and sounds; but it never approaches the shores, unless to build, which it does on the rocks; and, as soon as the breeding season is over, it departs till next season.

The SHEARWATER (*procellaria puffinus*, Lin. Syst.), our *lyre*, is a migratory bird, which generally comes to the rocks in February or March, and, some time after its arrival, builds in the crevices of them; it lays a single white egg, much like that of a hen, but more obtuse at the ends. In August, the young of the species are caught, when they are very fat; and by some they are reckoned excellent eating. From the form of its bill, no less than from the contents that have been found in its stomach, it is highly probable that this bird lives by its industry as a fisher.

The GREATER TERN (*sterna hirundo*, Lin. Syst.), which is here known by the name of the *Rittoch*, appears only in summer, and breeds in the little holms, or islets, in the sea and fresh water lochs, where it meets with no disturbance.

The PEWIT GULL (*larus ridibundus*, Lin. Syst.), here called the *hooded-crow*, is frequently seen in spring, and sometimes in summer; and builds in the grassy lochs and little holms which the Islands contain, especially in those of Evie and Stennis.

The TARROCK (*larus tridactylus*, Lin. Syst.), which seems to be our *kittywake*, is by far the most common of the kind in this place; and indeed

to



to such a degree does this species cover the rocks with its numbers, that they appear white at a distance.

The COMMON GULL (*larus canus*, Lin. Syft.), our *sea-maw*, or *white-maw*, is so numerous on all our shores, rocks, bays, and harbours, that their noise is sometimes disagreeable.

The BROWN and WHITE GULL (*larus naevius*, Lin. Syft.), which the people here call the *scorey*, is much more rarely met with than most others; but in spring it may frequently be seen in the fields, assiduously attending the swine, and sharing what these animals procure from the ground.

The HERRING GULL (*larus fuscus*, Lin. Syft.) may be seen in great numbers on all our rocks, which are the haunts of this species, where, without interruption, it builds and rears its young.

The ARCTIC GULL (*larus parasiticus*, Lin. Syft.), which, from its mode of life, or manner of subsistence, has got the name of the *Scoutiaulin*, is a migratory bird, that comes in the month of May, and takes its leave of us, with the great tern or sea swallow; it builds in marshy ground, and sometimes among heath, in company with the snipe and the lapwing.

The GREAT BLACK and WHITE GULL (*larus marinus*, Lin. Syft.), our *black-backed maw*, or as it is sometimes called *swartback*, is the largest of the gull kind in our seas. It continues the whole year; builds on the shelves of insulated rocks around the shores; and is so voracious a bird, that, like the eagle, it will devour fish, flesh, carrion of any sort, and even garbage.

The RED-THROATED DIVER (*colymbus septentrionalis*, Lin. Syft.), the *raingoose* of this place, is a constant inhabitant, and builds on the bank of a lake in Hoy and in other places, so that it can slide into the water at pleasure, through which it makes its way with great rapidity, though it can neither stand nor walk on land on account of its particular formation. In flying, which it does sometimes very high, it utters a howling or croaking noise, which the country people consider as an indication of rain; and, from this circumstance, it has got the name which it bears, with the addition of *goose*, an appellation bestowed on almost every swimming bird in this country.

The



The GREY SPECKLED DIVER (*loon will*, Ornith.), which is here named the *loon*, appears only in winter on our shores, and in spring removes probably to the north, in search of a place for more quiet incubation.

The IMMER (*colymbus immer*, Lin. Syst.), which is the *ember*, or *immer* *goose* of this country, is a species that may be seen in single birds, or at most two or three together, in many of our bays and sounds at all seasons. As this bird seems neither able to fly, nor is ever seen on land; and, as both the place and manner of its breeding are as yet unknown, credulity has led some to think, that its egg is hatched under its wing in a hole, which nature has prepared for that purpose \*, or that this function is performed under the water †.

The GREAT NORTHERN DIVER (*colymbus glacialis*, Lin. Syst.), though a very different bird from the former, is here called the *ember goose* also, and is frequently met with in all our seas; but particularly in our bays and harbours, which it enters in pursuit of small fish, its only subsistence. The similarity that has been observed in the nature and position of the feet and wings of this bird and the former, and our ignorance of the place of breeding of the one as well as the other, have given rise to the same ridiculous opinion respecting its mode of hatching. This is the largest diver we have, as the length is three feet and a half, the breadth four feet eight inches, and its weight not less than sixteen pounds.

The BLACK GUILLEMOTE (*colymbus grylle*, Lin. Syst.), or, as we call it, the *tyffe*, remains with us all the year, and may be seen fishing in our sounds and friths, even in the very worst weather in winter.

The GUILLEMOTE (*colymbus troile*, Lin. Syst.), here the *skout*, remains with us all the winter, frequents the rocks around the shores in large flocks, in company with those of its kind, and, like them too, lays only one egg, which is large and beautiful.

The LITTLE AUK (*alca alce*, Lin. Syst.) may be seen on our rocks pretty frequently.

\* Wallace's Description of Orkney.

† Sir Robert Sibbald's History of Scotland. Anser qui nidulari sub aqua, et sub aqua etiam ovis incubare traditur.



The PUFFIN (*alcaarctica*, Lin. Syft.), the *coulterneb*, or *tommy noddie* of this place, is seen very often on our rocks; it builds in holes under ground, and lays but one egg.

The AUK (*alca torda*, Lin. Syft.), the same with our *baukie*, comes hither in March, and without delay takes possession of almost all the high rocks on the headlands, where it lays only one large egg in the shelf of a bare rock, exposed to the heat of the sun, which probably assists in hatching it.

The WHITE and DUSKY GREBE (*colymbus minor*, Brisson) is the only species of grebe known as an inhabitant of this place. They are found in the bays, lochs, and even in the dirty pools of fresh water in all seasons, and build among the grass in the loch of Aikerness, and other similar places.

The RED SCOLOP-TOED SANDPIPER (*tringa hyperborea*, Lin. Syft.) is a bird that has been seen sometimes in this country.

The WATER HEN (*fulica chloropus*, Lin. Syft.) is a species found in plenty in the loch of Evie, where among the weeds it builds its nest, and breeds several times in the year; it lays seven eggs of a dirty white, spotted with a rusty colour; and, in order to make way for a new brood, it drives off its young as soon as they are able to procure subsistence for themselves.

The LAND RAIL, (*rallus crex*, Lin. Syft), which is so well known by the name of the *corncrake*, comes about the month of May, and remains till the breeding season be over; it builds in the richest fields of corn and grass, among which it is accustomed to hide itself, and lays sixteen eggs; while it is hatching them, it sometimes perishes by the severity of the weather.

The WATER RAIL (*rallus aquaticus*, Lin. Syft.) has been seen sometimes, though very rarely, in this country.

The SEA PIE, (*hæmatopus ostralegus*, Lin. Syft.) which in some places here gets the name of the *scolder*, may be seen frequently on our rocky coasts, where it lives on limpets and other shell-fish, and builds and remains with us constantly.



The SEA LARK (*charadrius hiaticula*, Lin. Syft.), the same with our *sand lark*, is seen in vast flocks around all our sandy bays and shores, especially in winter; but as soon as summer arrives, they retire to the bare and barren brakes, where they build a small nest on the ground, and lay four eggs of a whitish colour.

The GREY PLOVER (*charadrius plumialis*, Lin. Syft.), or with us simply the *plover*, may be found at all times of the year; but, in the month of August, the flocks consist of many thousands, in which they remain till the winter storms drive them down to the sea-shores, where they live on insects and sea-worms, like the other waders.

The DUNLIN (*tringa alpina*, Lin. Syft.), in small flocks, frequents our low sandy shores during the winter; but in spring, withdraws to the marshy parts of the hills, for the purpose of hatching and rearing its offspring.

The PURR (*tringa cinclus*, Lin. Syft.) is also to be found in small flocks in winter; but in spring it retires to the hills to breed, in company with the sea or sand larks.

The TURNSTONE (*tringa interpres*, Lin. Syft.) comes to us in severe snowy winters, when it may be seen in small flocks of six or seven each, by the sea-side; but it never remains through the summer, retiring, like most of the birds that visit us in winter, to the more northern countries to build with the other *grallæ*.

The REDSHANK (*scolopax calidris*, Lin. Syft.) continues with us the whole year; builds in the marshy hills in summer; and, when winter approaches, retires to the sea-side, where it finds suitable sustenance.

The LAPWING (*tringa vanellus*, Lin. Syft.) which, from the sound it utters, has the name of the *teerwhoop* here, comes early in the spring; builds in bogs or marshy grounds, lays four eggs, and discovers the most intrepid bravery in defending its nest and young in the breeding season.

The GODWIT (*scolopax ægocephala*, Lin. Syft.) is very rarely met with in this place, and is perhaps only a visitor; as are also the *greenshank* and *woodcock*, which have been seen sometimes, though very seldom.

The JACK SNIFE (*scolopax gallinula*, Lin. Syft.) is seen here, though not very often: it frequents marshy moors, sits close, and is difficult to spring, and builds here, as it has been met with in summer.

The SNIFE, (*scolopax gallinago*, Lin. Syft.) which is here named the



*boarfgouk*, continues with us the whole year; builds in the wet ground on the hills; lays from four to six eggs; and in winter has recourse to the sea, or the springs of fresh water.

The CURLEW (*scolopax arquata*, Lin. Syst.), our *wbaap*, is one of the waders that is most commonly met with about our shores, and very often in flocks. It builds on all our most retired hills, among which may be reckoned those of Hoy, Waes, Haray, Rendal, and Roufay.

The HERON (*ardea cinerea*, Lin. Syst.) has a small body and a large flight, to procure its food from a distance; long legs, for wading to some depth in the water; and a very long neck and sharp edged bill, to enable it to detain its prey. If the *crane* and the *bittern* are to be ranked among our birds, they must certainly be classed with the strangers, which are driven in by storms, or some unknown accidents, and that perhaps only twice or thrice in a century.

The CRESTED HERON (*ardea major*, Lin. Syst.) is very frequently seen with us in winter, and often in flocks of fifty: but whether this species continues with us the whole year or not, is a matter of uncertainty.

The SAND MARTIN (*hirundo riparia*, Lin. Syst.) is here the most common of the swallow tribe; it may often be seen on the lochs of Stennis and Skail, on the banks of which, among the sand, it builds its nest, which is composed of straw, hay, feathers, and other soft materials.

The MARTIN (*hirundo urbica*, Lin. Syst.) besides several other places where it may be seen, haunts the cathedral of St. Magnus, in Kirkwall, in the windows of which, during summer, it builds its nest of clay, and in winter leaves us for some other country.

The HOUSE SWALLOW (*hirundo rustica*, Lin. Syst.) is found here, though not in great numbers; it builds in the chimnies of the houses in Kirkwall, and like the rest of the race, leaves us in winter.

The WHITE EAR (*motacilla ænanthe*, Lin. Syst.), here denominated the *chack*, is a migratory bird, remaining with us through the summer and harvest, in the end of which it departs; but not till it has built its nest and reared its young, which it does in old walls and under stones.

The GOLDENCRESTED WREN (*motacilla regulus*, Lin. Syst.) is a very beautiful little bird, and pretty frequently seen in this place, where it breeds and has its constant residence.



The WREN (*motacilla troglodytes*, Lin. Syst.) in winter builds in the walls of the houses, making a large nest of moss, lined with some softer materials, in which it lays eggs, to the number of fifteen or upwards.

The REDBREAST (*motacilla rubecula*, Lin. Syst.) never migrates, but remains with us the whole year, and builds about the farm-houses and barns, in holes of the walls or in rocks.

The WHITE WAGTAIL (*motacilla alba*, Lin. Syst.) is one of our migratory small birds, and continues only a short time with us; coming early in spring, and building in holes of walls, and, as soon as incubation is over, retiring immediately. Its ordinary haunts, while it stays, are in the vicinity of watery places, where it feeds on insects; and it may often be observed attending the plough, in order to pick up worms.

The TIT-LARK (*alauda arvensis*, Lin. Syst.) is a species of bird very commonly met with here, and continues with us constantly; in summer withdrawing to build on the hills and in the fields, and in winter betaking itself to the sea-side, where it lives on various sorts of insects; and when the weather in that season is extremely severe, even approaching houses.

The SKY-LARK (*alauda arvensis*, Lin. Syst.) remains with us constantly; it begins to sing about the first of February, and continues its pleasant notes for the most part of summer.

The MOUNTAIN LINNET, or TWITE, (*fringilla montana*, Lin. Syst.) is easily distinguished from the rest of the genus by the beautiful purple spot on its rump; it continues with us all the year, and builds in heathy places.

The LESSER REDHEADED LINNET (*fringilla linaria*, Lin. Syst.) may be very often seen in winter about farm-yards, and in the breeding season building among the small shrubs and heath in the hills and valleys of Hoy.

The LINNET (*la linote*, Brisson. av.) is a bird that may be very frequently met with in this place, where it builds among the shrubs that grow on the banks of rivulets, but never among heath. It remains in the islands during the whole year.

The CHAFFINCH (*fringilla cælebs*, Lin. Syst.) may be seen frequently in spring, and probably continues through the year, at least some few of the species do, which build in Hoy, and in gardens.



The GREATER BRAMBLING, (*emberiza nivalis*, Lin. Syft.) our *snow-flake*, is a migratory bird, and in some years appears in vast numbers from the north; it continues with us the most part of the winter, departs in spring, and is seen no more, till forced back by the severity of the weather next season.

The BUNTING (*emberiza miliaria*, Lin. Syft.) is a bird that continues with us the whole year, builds in fields of corn, and is shot in great numbers, in the farm-yards, as it is much valued for the table.

The SPARROW (*fringilla domestica*, Lin. Syft.) is a species that frequents this place in myriads, commits great devastation in such corn-fields as are first ripe in the season, builds wherever it finds the least convenience, and often drives the *stare* from its nest, in order that it may take possession.

The BLACKBIRD (*turdus merula*, Lin. Syft.) is in Hoy found in pairs in summer, and in single birds in winter.

The REDWING, (*turdus iliacus*, Lin. Syft.) for the most part of summer, and always in harvest, may be seen in Hoy, where it probably builds among the shrubs in the valleys.

The SONG THRUSH, or THROSTLE, (*turdus musicus*, Lin. Syft.) which we call the *mavis*, may be seen frequently among the bushes in the glens of Hoy, and sometimes in the gardens of Kirkwall, where it builds its finely plastered nest on the shrubs or stunted fruit trees.

The FIELDFARE (*turdus pilaris*, Lin. Syft.) makes us pretty regular visits in autumn, but neither builds with us nor remains through the winter, and only perhaps touches here in its way from the north to a more genial climate.

The STARE (*sturnus vulgaris*, Lin. Syft.), which is an innocent, prattling, mimicking bird, is very often seen in this country, where it builds in old houses, churches, and sea-rocks; and, as some think, breeds twice in the same season. They live on worms and insects as their ordinary means of subsistence; but in winter they commonly retire to the sea-side, and feed on what are called the sea-lice, or *cancer pulex* of Linnæus.

The GROUS (*lagopus altera*, Plinii, Raii Syft.) frequents the hills of Hoy, Waes, Rousay, Rendal, Holm, and some other parts through the Islands;



and though in some of these they are pretty numerous, they are not so much so as on many of the mountains in Scotland. *Partridges* we have none, nor does the place seem calculated for them, as some pairs were some years ago brought to Waes by way of experiment, which all soon perished, owing perhaps to their not finding convenient food, or more probably to want of shelter.

The COMMON PIGEON (*columba ænas*, Lin. Syst.) is found very frequently on almost all our rocks, where it builds in caves, much farther in than either the auks or gulls, or most other sea-fowl, except some of the petrels.

The CUCKOO, (*cuculus canorus*, Lin. Syst.) or *gouk* of this place, is found, though but rarely, in the retired and romantic hills of Hoy and Waes.

The JACKDAW (*corvus monedula*, Lin. Syst.) which is here named the *kae*, as in several other places, has been found during the breeding season in South Ronaldshay and Waes, where it builds in the holes of the rocks with the *stares*, and wild or *rock pigeons*. The *magpie*, so common in the south, is never seen here; and the *rook*, if it ever appears, is supposed to portend a famine; and as for the *woodpeckers*, we do not seem to have one of the genus.

The ROYSTON CROW (*corvus cornix*, Lin. Syst.) remains with us the whole year, and in the breeding season destroys many of the chickens, but at other times contents itself with insects and garbage. They are very numerous, build in the rocks, form their nests of sticks, and line them with some softer materials; and, through the winter, familiarly hover around the houses.

The RAVEN, (*corvus corax*, Lin. Syst.) which is our *corby*, is seen almost every where in winter and spring, but is very shy or wild; it remains the whole year; and in breeding time, while its young are in the nest, is extremely destructive to lambs, pigs, and hens.

The BROWN OWL (*strix ulula*, Lin. Syst.) is a species found in the hilly parts in summer; but as it is never seen in winter, it is probably migratory.

The



The WHITE OWL, (*Strix flammea*, Lin. Syft.) the *bowlet* of this place, is found in the more retired places of Hoy in summer, where it builds; but at other times it is more domestic, and ventures into old houses, ruins, and churches.

The SHORT-EARED OWL (Brit. Zool. No. 66.) may be found frequently in the hills of Hoy, where it builds among the heath, and during the breeding season it sometimes pursues pigeons in day-light, and picks up chickens from the very doors of the houses.

The EAGLE OWL, (*Strix bubo*, Lin. Syft.) our *katogle* or *stock-owl*, is but rarely met with, and only on the hilly and retired parts of the country.

The MERLIN (*Pemerillon*, Brisson.) is often seen skimming along the fields in search of its prey, which, as it flies low, it kills with the stroke of its wing: though it be small, it is inferior to none of the tribe in either spirit or agility.

The SPARROW HAWK, (*Falco nisus*, Lin. Syft.) which is a very mischievous species, is very often seen on our rocks, and on the steep sides of the hills, where it builds, and defends its nest, if attacked, with the utmost violence and intrepidity.

The KESTREL, (*Falco tinnunculus*, Lin. Syft.) which, from its motion in the air, we name the *windcuffer*, may frequently be observed, as if stationed with its eyes fixed on the ground, to discover its prey, small birds, mice, and chickens, on which it darts down with such unerring speed, that they very seldom escape its talons.

The HEN HARRIER, (*Falco cyaneus*, Lin. Syft.) here the *katabella*, is a species very often met with. It remains with us the whole year; approaches nearer the country houses than any of the tribe, and very frequently makes great havock among the young poultry. In winter it is almost white; in summer more ash-coloured.

The GOSHAWK (*Falco palumbarius*, Lin. Syft.) is pretty frequently seen, and breeds here.

The KITE or GLED (*Falco milvus*, Lin. Syft.) was seen in this place formerly, and sometimes is so at present, though very rarely.

The



The GYRFALCON (*gyrfalco*, Raii. synopf. aviar.) has certainly been seen here; but whether it be a native or a stranger, is as yet uncertain.

The PEREGRINE FALCON, (*falco peregrinus niger*, Aldv. aviar.) or, as we style it by way of eminence, *the falcon*, is a species found on our headlands and inaccessible rocks, such as the burgh of Birsay, Marwickhead, the stupendous rocks of Hoy and Waes and Copinsay, the Fairisle and Rousay. Never more than one pair of this species inhabit the same rock; and as soon as the young have acquired sufficient strength to procure subsistence, they are driven out by their parents to seek new habitations for themselves.

This noble kind of hawk was in such respect in ancient times, when falconry was the fashion of the day, that it was commonly carried from our most remote rocks to amuse the Kings of Scotland. The following clause in the act of Parliament for dissolving and disannexing the earldom of Orkney from the crown, points out the estimation in which they were held: ‘That all hawks be reserved to his Majesty, with the falconer’s salaries, according to ancient custom.’ To this day a hen from every house, or at least a certain number from each parish, are exacted, and paid annually to the royal falconer; and these are said to have been originally intended for food to the hawks of his Majesty.

The ERNE (*falco albicilla*, Lin. Syst.) is not only frequently seen, but builds and rears its young in this country.

The SEA EAGLE (*falco offefragus*, Lin. Syst.) is often seen, and sometimes surprised, on our low shores, voraciously devouring fish, which it has itself caught, or which has been, when half eaten, forsaken by the otter.

The RINGTAIL EAGLE, (*falco fulvus*, Lin. Syst.) which, together with the other eagles, is here named the *erne*, is very frequently seen on the hills, builds on the rocks, is of a large size, distinguished from the rest by a band of white encompassing the root of the tail, and the legs being covered with feathers down to the very feet; and is of such prodigious strength, that it is said to have sometimes carried from a considerable distance to its eyry, not only fowls, but lambs, pigs, and even, in some instances,  
young



young children, if we trust the authority of a respectable author\*, whose account is also supported by tradition.

Such devastation did this race of birds formerly commit among the poultry, pigs, rabbits, lambs and sheep of this place, that a law was framed, in which a reward was granted to any person that should destroy either one of their nests, or one of themselves †.

QUADRU-  
PEDS.

The SHREW MOUSE (*orex araneus*, Lin. Syst.) is found here, though but rarely. It labours under the same bad character here, that it does in other places, as it is believed to hurt cattle by its bite or its breath; but though this allegation may be unfounded, the odour that arises from its body is so offensive, as to make it avoided by almost every other animal.

The MOUSE (*mus musculus*, Lin. Syst.) is very common, except in one or two of the islands, where it is pretended that neither mice, rats, nor even cats will live; but as this has not as yet been ascertained as a fact, it may perhaps be one of those vulgar prejudices which are not unfrequent in every country.

The SHORT-TAILED FIELD MOUSE, (*mus agrestis*, Lin. Syst.) which with us has the name of the *vole mouse*, is very often found in marshy grounds that are covered with moss and short heath, in which it makes roads or tracks of about three inches in breadth, and sometimes miles in length, much worn by continual treading, and warped into a thousand different directions.

The FIELD MOUSE (*mus sylvaticus*, Lin. Syst.) may be pretty frequently found in our fields, where it burrows, and forms apartments, in which it lays up stores of grain for its winter provision. These apartments, however, which it provides with so much care, it is sometimes deprived of, by the field bee.

The BROWN or NORWEGIAN RAT, (*le surmulot* de Buffon) a very large and mischievous species, not originally a native, but introduced into this place by shipping, swarms almost every where, and suffers none of the

\* Sir Robert Sibbald's History of Scotland.

† See the County Acts in the Appendix, No. IX. 'Anent slaying of the Earne.'



genus to remain where it comes. It infests houses, barns, store-houses, hen-roosts, rabbit-warrens, and, in some instances, even churchyards. Through almost the whole Islands it has extended itself; and wherever it has fixed its abode, it has almost extirpated the black kind, and has thus done us more hurt than service; since it has all the disposition to be destructive which the other has, and, at the same time, much greater power and capacity. The length, from the tip of the nose to the point of the tail, is eighteen inches; the thickness of the body is in proportion. The strength of the animal is very great; its legs are firm, and its claws sharp; and its fore teeth and muscles can hardly be resisted by the most solid materials. To its other powers, it adds that of swimming, which it performs with great ease and rapidity. It dives readily, and remains a considerable time under the water. If it be attacked even by man, it discovers no great alarm; but, after running a little distance, it sometimes stops short, stands with an intrepid air, and even threatens resistance.

The COMMON BLACK RAT (*mus rattus*, Lin. Syst.) is still an inhabitant of this place, but whether originally a native or a stranger, is uncertain. The species was formerly numerous, and as destructive as the rest of the genus; but it has of late been confined to one or two of the islands, owing to the former species, which has almost entirely extirpated them through the rest of this country. In size and strength it is inferior to its adversary, but not in its disposition to plunder; and when once it has established itself in a place, there are no means known of expelling it.

The RABBIT (*lepus cuniculus*, Lin. Syst.) is a species of animals that abounds here to such a degree, that their skins make a very considerable branch of our commerce. They are preyed on by hawks, eagles, dogs, cats, and otters; and yet they increase prodigiously, in spite of all this depredation. They feed on corn and grass, and even sometimes, when these cannot be obtained, and the weather is severe, on sea-weed and the roots of vegetables; and their resort is dry links-ground, which, if firm, they dig into without much detriment; but if of a loose, sandy texture, they break it so much by their burrowing, that sand-blowing, which in some places has been so destructive, is often the consequence. The colour of most of them is brown, with the belly a shade or two lighter. An en-



tirely white one is very rare; and those that frequent the hills are hoary in winter.

As we have rabbits in such plenty, it might be expected that we should have hares also, especially as there is reason to believe that they existed in this country formerly, as hare hunting is said to have been an amusement of the ancient Earls, which it never could have been, unless the species had been widely diffused, and of consequence pretty numerous\*. Moreover, hares of a white colour † were found in Hoy, and hunted with dogs, about the beginning of the sixteenth century. Soon after the middle of the seventeenth they had disappeared, but were then reported to have been found either black or white, about eighty years before, in the same island, on the two great mountains ‡.

The multitude of birds of prey, such as hawks and eagles, may have destroyed both the old and the young; to which may be added, the great number of dogs accustomed to be kept about all the houses, and the want of woods, broom, whins, &c. which are well known to be the haunts of these animals at all seasons, but more especially in winter.

That these are the causes which have destroyed the breed of hares in Orkney will appear the more probable, when it is considered, that after they had disappeared in the other islands, they still continued for some time longer in Hoy, which is distinguished among the group for its sequestered situation, its high hills, and deep glens and valleys, intersected by rapid streams, the banks of which are dry, and covered with flowers and shrubs.

The SEAL (*phoca vitulina*, Lin. Syst.) which is here generally known by the name of *felchy*, is very common on most of our low shores, but particularly on those of the small holms and remote skerries, where it is frequently seen reposing and basking in the sun, in fine calm weather, and where it brings forth its young. The species in this place is very numerous; and some of them are so large as to measure eight or nine feet from the point of the nose to the claws on the hind legs; and, at the shoulders,

\* Torfaus, p. 136.

† Ben. MSS. See Appendix, No. VII.

‡ See Mackaile, Appendix No. VIII. Monteith. Wallace.



they are nearly as much in circumference. If boats be passing near their haunts, they seem to discover some curiosity in looking stedfastly, and listening to the stroke of the oars, the conversation of the people, or to any noise that is unusual.

They are valuable for their skins, (of which shoes, flippers, and covers for trunks and saddles are made), and for the oil which they furnish. In order to obtain these very useful articles, the animals are knocked down with clubs, caught in nets, and shot with muskets, in their ordinary resorts, which are the skerries of Hoy and Waes, the skerries of North Ronaldsay, the skerries of Eday, of Westray, of Wier, and the Pentland skerries. In some few places, the flesh of the young seals is used fresh; and, both in that state and in that of hams, is said to be tolerable.

The OTTER (*mustela lutra*, Lin. Syst.) is very frequently found burrowing on the shores of the sea, and on the banks of fresh-water lochs, where it lives on cod fish, conger-eels, and all kinds of trout. It is so nice in its taste, as only to consume the finer parts, while it leaves the remainder. The fur, which is excellent, is the only thing valuable, and, if the animal be killed in winter, sells for about ten shillings sterling.

The CAT (*felis catus*, Lin. Syst.) like most of our domestic animals, is rather of a diminutive size. If the houses to which they belong be situated on the borders of links-ground, or in the vicinity of rabbit warrens, cats are apt to become wild, and make dreadful havock among the rabbits. Such of them as become wild, soon acquire an uncommon degree of bulk and fatness; and to these qualities they generally add so much increased ferocity, as renders them almost as formidable as any other rapacious animal.

The DOG (*canis familiaris*, Lin. Syst.) here is not remarkable; for the only ones we have, are the greyhound, kept for catching rabbits; the land and water spaniel and the pointer, used for the purpose of carrying and fowling; the mastiff, for guarding ships, and protecting houses; the terrier, used formerly for searching out rabbits; some varieties of the lapdog; and the shepherd's dog, with its mongrels. This faithful animal is the constant guardian of the corn and the grass in the fields, as well as of the



productions of the gardens, against the whole tribe of domestic granivorous animals. To a little farmer, in a mean condition, his dog is of more value than even a horse or a cow; since it is by his means alone that he can preserve the produce of his possession.

Neither wolves nor foxes are natives of these Islands, or ever appear to have been so.

Several species of animals, it is well known, that formerly frequented the plains both of Europe and America have now entirely disappeared; and we should never have known that they existed, had not their bones been occasionally dug up. There is unquestionably one species that has been resident here formerly, which is not found at present, viz. the Deer; the horns of which have been dug up in various places. An entire skeleton was also dug up, some years ago, in the heart of an old ruin, in the middle of a loch, in a parish contiguous to one that is said to have derived its name from its being the abode of these animals. The parish to which we allude is Deerness, a peninsula on the eastern extremity of the Mainland, which is believed to have been named the Cape of Deers, because it abounded in these quadrupeds, that found shelter in the forest with which it was then covered, and which was afterwards destroyed by a storm and inundation. In some of the ground in that parish, which is of a marshy nature, deers' horns have several times been found; as also hazel nuts, in considerable numbers. These had no kernels, but the shells were entirely preserved.

The HOG (*sus scrofa*, Lin. Syst.) which we have in these Islands, is very different from the ordinary sort, and, both from its nature and the mode in which it is managed, extremely pernicious. The species is small; the colour variable, black, brown, dirty white, and tawny; the back highly arched, and covered with a great quantity of long, stiff bristles; the ears erect and sharp pointed; the nose amazingly strong: its awkward shape and ugly appearance show it to be different from what are met with in almost every other part of the kingdom. They are in general as lean as they are ugly, having only a very poor pasture; but when put up to be fed, and furnished with suitable provender, they in a short time, and at little



little expence, acquire flesh, which, for delicacy and flavour, is much esteemed. They are suffered to roam at large, through the whole winter and spring, and even sometimes in harvest and summer; and tear up the arable land, in winter, and form in it large holes, in which water stands, greatly to its detriment. They also destroy the roots of the grass, and, wherever they come, greatly hurt the growing corn, and almost extirpate the sown grass, turnips, and potatoes. The inhabitants prefer the flesh of the swine, however lean, to that of almost any other animal. In the spring season, when other meat is scarce, pork, fresh or salted, is very much used by every class of people; and, made into ham, it is in great request at all seasons, on account of its truly excellent quality. Even the hair of these animals is an article of considerable value, in as far as it serves as a substitute for hemp in making ropes to anchor fishing-boats; for confining in the field, horses and cattle; and for binding about the middle of the rock-men in order to let them down in safety to rob the nests and catch the young of such birds as build in the shelves of the rocks.

The SHEEP (*ovis aries*, Lin. Syst.) here is a peculiar breed, and, from some features in its character, seems to have sprung from the same stock with those of Iceland, the Ferroes, and Shetland\*. Though of a tolerably good kind, and every where very numerous, they are of little benefit to the owners, owing to the absurd custom of suffering them to run wild on the extensive commons, exposed to the violence of the sea, the severity of the weather, the depredation of various distempers, and to the dogs and eagles. In these circumstances, however, which are certainly very unfavourable, they not only continue to exist, but show more fecundity than in most other places; as many of them have two, and some of them three lambs at a birth, all of which the mother sometimes nurses, especially if the season be mild and the pasture tolerable. They are of a small size, the whole carcase weighing only about thirty-six pounds; most of them want horns; their faces are white or grey; their bodies and legs short; their tails are in length not above three or four inches; and their fleeces, some of which are very fine, do not weigh above a pound and a half, or

\* Doctor Von Troil's Letters on Iceland. Debes on the Ferroe Islands.



two pounds each, at an average. Their flesh, in general, is not the most pleasant; but this is evidently owing to the want of care in their management as well as to the nature of their pasture; since, in some few of the Islands, where the people have overcome their prejudices so far as to bestow some attention on them, both the lamb and the mutton are preferable to what are found in other parts of the country. In some places, the sheep wander to the shore at low-water, and make a plentiful meal on the different kinds of sea-weed; and when they have been accustomed to live much on that food, their flesh is of a dark colour, dry, and of a coarse texture; and, when prepared for the table, has been thought to bear some resemblance to venison.

Had Buffon been acquainted with our breed, he would not have asserted that the species, on account of their natural defects, cannot subsist without the protection of man; since, here they not only live, but multiply, unprotected, nearly as well as most animals do in a natural state. Neither, in that case, would he have neglected to mention a fact, that is sufficiently well attested, and merits some notice in the natural history of the species.

In those little uninhabited islands that are called holms, pregnant ewes are frequently put to pasture, in order that they may enjoy the quiet of the place, and bring forth their young in greater safety. If, about the time of yeaning, a person with a dog enters the place, the ewes, unaccustomed to this animal, take the alarm, suddenly start up and run a little, when, in a moment, they drop down dead, probably by the joint influence of surprise, fear, and weakness. Such as have died in this manner, and have been opened, have been found to contain two, and sometimes three lambs within them. The same want of attention to our sheep, that manifestly hurts the nature of the carcase, has, without doubt, some influence on the quality of the wool also; which is notwithstanding very excellent. Instead of washing the animals carefully, as in other places, before they be shorn, in order to clear the wool of what may be hurtful, it is taken off from them in its foul state; and, without regard to sorting, in general all kinds of it are mixed together, for the purpose of being manufactured  
into



into a coarse cloth and stockings, for the use of the inhabitants, and for exportation.

Much more attention was paid to the sheep of this place formerly, than is bestowed on them at present. This appears evidently from the County Acts \*, in which are many wise regulations with regard to marking them, so as to ascertain and secure the property, the time and circumstances of shearing, or, as it is here called, *rowing* them, and even the transferring them by sale or barter from one person to another. In virtue of these laws or regulations, these operations were all to be performed, not in private, nor yet at the will of the owners, but in the presence of the Baillie and the Lawrightmen, who were the public officers of the parish, in order to give them such notriety, as to prevent frauds, in a matter that deeply concerned the community.

To understand this, it must be observed, that the sheep of a whole island or parish made only one flock; to which no person, however great his interest, could have access, unless in the manner that the law directed, which was by timely notice and proper application. The authority of the Baillie, who was supreme in these matters, was to be recognised, and his consent obtained, before they could either mark, or buy and sell, or kill or row any of these animals. This last operation, namely rowing, in place of shearing, was performed about Midsummer, and previously announced by a public officer, that the time might be known to all who had an interest in the flock. When the day appointed came, such men in the parish as had a right to keep sheep-dogs †, met, and, travelling through the hills, by means of these, collected the sheep, and drove them into narrow pens, in order to be stript of their covering. For this purpose, the owners attended, and laid hold of their own sheep, according to their marks, which were all kept in a register; and, instead of cutting, pulled the wool forcibly from their bodies.

The other regulations are mostly disused; this last, in some measure, is still in force; and the same inconvenient, not to say cruel, mode of obtaining the wool is practised at present in Iceland ‡.

\* For the County Acts. See Appendix, No. VIII.

† Idem.

‡ Dr. Troil.



From viewing the face of these Islands, consisting of hills and vales, and surrounded in many places with bold rocks, and stupendous precipices, and clothed with plants congenial to such situations, it would naturally have been expected that goats, elsewhere common in such situations, would have been among the number of our animals. As several other species that formerly inhabited this region have been lost, the species of goats may have shared the same fate, though we have no account of their former existence, nor have ever their horns or their bones been dug up. If they were introduced, however, they could scarcely fail to thrive on such pasture as we have in abundance; and as they are said to feed on such grass as is pernicious to sheep, they might promote the health of that much neglected, though very useful species, and, in this respect, as well as in several others, contribute to the advantage of the proprietors and their tenants.

The Ox (*bos taurus*, Lin. Syst.) which is common here, is of a singular breed, altogether distinct from what is seen in the counties nearest us in the south, and probably, like several other of our domestic animals, came originally from the Scandinavian shores. But, from whatever country, or whatever stock they sprung, the cattle of this place, at present, are of a very diminutive size, owing principally to their being reared in too great number, and, of consequence, half starved in their youth.

Their colour is black, brown, white, and, in many instances, party-coloured, mottled, or brindled; and their shape inelegant, as their heads are low, their backs high, their buttocks thin, their bones prominent; and instead of having large, wide-spreading horns, they have only small ones, that are short and contracted, with their tops bending toward the forehead.

Notwithstanding these disadvantages in point of shape and appearance, the oxen are strong, hardy, and make excellent workers, provided they be early well-trained to the yoke, and so plentifully fed as to enable them to support their labour. Even on a very moderate quantity of provender, they will perform a surprising quantity of work, in the cart or in the plough; and not for a few seasons only, but for the space of no less than six or seven years. To their capacity for work, they add another excellence, in not being subject to disease; and they are, at the same time, such



rapid feeders, that if put up in the stall, or on good pasture, but for a few months, their beef becomes excellent.

The cows are also small and lean, being kept in too great numbers, though they can support themselves pretty well in fields where the grass is by no means abundant. A very moderate degree of food also soon renders them fat. They produce a calf, for the most part, annually, and give a quantity of excellent milk; which, considering their size, their habit of body, and their pasture, is really astonishing. An ox of an ordinary bulk, and of the common country breed, weighs about sixty pounds the quarter; while a cow of the same description does not exceed forty-five pounds; and both of them have increased so much in value of late, as now to cost treble the price for which they would have sold fifteen years ago. 1800. This increased value has not arisen from any improvement in the breed, in consequence of an intermixture with that of other places; for that has only taken place in a few instances; but from a much greater demand for the labour of oxen and the butter of cows, and for the beef of both, to answer an augmented consumption here, and to supply the markets in other counties. As an instance to what extent the demand from these markets sometimes reaches, no longer ago than last year, nearly two thousand live cattle were sold to dealers from the south, who carried them across the Pentland Frith, and drove them, for feeding, into the different districts of the kingdom. Such a vast deduction, in one season, from the breed of a small district, might be supposed to have nearly exhausted the stock; but this was by no means the case, as there was a sufficient number left for every useful purpose; and this will excite no surprise, when it is considered that our ordinary stock of black cattle is calculated to amount to upwards of fifty thousand.

The original breed of the HORSE here, which, like most of the other tame animals, came at first, it is likely, from the northern parts of the Old Continent, was, in point of not only size and shape, but other qualities, not much different from those at present in Shetland. Hence, they have been classed together, and the very same description applied to both of them\*.

\* Buchan. Hist. Scot.



The case, however, is widely different at present; since our breed of horses appears to be descended from that in the northern counties of Scotland. This change, which may seem a little extraordinary, has been effected by an absurd custom, which the people have long had, of purchasing horses of an year old from their neighbours in Sutherland and Caithness, and selling them again, when old, at a very reduced price, to the same people; and this without the least shadow of necessity; as the money thus laid out might all have been saved, and equally good, if not better horses reared in their own country. To such a degree, however, did this custom prevail, about half a century ago, that nearly two thousand young horses were annually purchased; whereas, now, the number bought does not exceed as many hundreds, since the people have conquered their prejudices, and begun to understand their own interest so far as to breed horses themselves.

But in this very important branch of rural œconomy, they have, as yet, very much to learn; as they pay little or no regard to the health, strength, spirit, or beauty of the horses which they keep for breeding. Neither do they show greater skill, or bestow more care in their management; since the males are much neglected, and the females treated improperly when they are with foal, as the young are when they are brought forth. Even when grown up, and fit for labour, these animals are not in a more favourable condition; as a number of them are then crowded into a small house, which is never warm, and seldom dry. No attention whatever is paid to cleaning them from time to time, so as to promote their health. Their food is a scanty portion of dry straw: and, while they are kept almost entirely idle and half-starved the one half of the year, they are pretty hard wrought, and but indifferently fed, during the other. In these circumstances, it is evident that they must be subject to many disorders, which frequently occur; and as soon as this happens, they are almost instantly considered as lost, and no person pays any attention to them.

But, notwithstanding these and other disadvantages under which they labour, our horses have a pretty good appearance; they are firm, docile, and, considering their diminutive size, discover an uncommon degree of strength; and, if early trained to the draught or the saddle, they are found  
very



very useful in both these respects. For any labour that this place requires, particularly in its present circumstances, they are perhaps as proper as much larger and finer horses; and the number kept, which is believed to amount to twenty-five thousand, is certainly much more than sufficient for every useful purpose.

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## CHAP. II.

### THE INHABITANTS OF THE ISLANDS.

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#### SECTION I.

#### THE POPULATION.

THE number of people which this province supported formerly, has frequently been stated to have been far greater than what it at present contains. What the extent of the population was at a very early period, we have no documents that can enable us positively to determine; though we may safely conclude it to have been considerable, from the earnest manner in which the alliance of the ancient Earls was courted, as well as from the decisive superiority which they gave to that side which they undertook to support. The representations more recently given of it are extravagant. In a general muster of the people by order of P. Stewart Earl of Orkney, the number is said to have been such, that ten thousand men, capable of bearing arms, could have been raised on any emergency, and as many left as were sufficient for the agriculture and fisheries \*. If we suppose the pro-

\* Bleau's Atlas.



portion of the former to the latter was as one to ten, which is certainly no unreasonable supposition, the inhabitants would be five hundred thousand. Though this number far exceeds the bounds of probability, it has been stated, in support of it, that ten thousand effective men from this country bore arms, at once, in those unfortunate civil wars that, in the seventeenth century, threatened to desolate the kingdom \*.

1686. Subsequently to that period, the inland excise upon ale and spirits in Orkney and Shetland was farmed at two thousand nine hundred and twenty-five pounds Scots; and, sixty years afterwards, not only the excise upon these articles, but upon malt, soap, candle, leather, &c. was let in lease to farmers for less than half that sum; and the diminished duties have been considered as a proof of diminished consumption, as that has been of a decreased population. In proof of this decrease, it has also been asserted, that many fields, which bear evident marks of former industry, are now, through neglect, returned to the state of nature. Houses have been suffered to tumble down; churches in different places are in ruins; and many castles, that were the seats of Gothic nobility, with their numerous attendants, are deserted, if not levelled with the ground. Still farther to confirm
1748. this point, it has been observed, that, about half a century ago, when a list of the inhabitants was made up, at the request of a respectable clergyman †, the number had suffered a considerable diminution.
1750. Much about the same time, they were again numbered by an accurate and judicious native ‡, with a view to ascertain the population, to be inserted in his nautical survey; a work that is equally creditable to himself, and advantageous to his country. No fewer than three several enumerations
1785. have been made of them within these seventeen years; the first of which was made on the recommendation of the synod to its members; the second in order to furnish materials for drawing up the statistical accounts; and the third in consequence of the act of parliament, framed with the design of ascertaining this point over the whole kingdom. These may be depended on as accurate, as they were made under the eye, and by the direction of the clergy, in their respective parishes; and, moreover, correspond ex-

\* Guthrie's Hist. Scot.

† Dr. Webster, Edinburgh.

‡ Mr. Murdoch Mackenzie.



actly with one another, as well as with that immediately preceding ; and the whole concur in making the population not more than twenty-four thousand.

If, then, the former accounts, in regard to this particular, were just, as the latter cannot reasonably be doubted, the decrease would be astonishing ; and to have produced such an effect, extraordinary causes must have contributed. Neither the increase of the weights, nor the failure of the crops in bad seasons, nor the heavy burden of the feu-duties, nor even the illicit trade which in former times was so extensively pernicious, nor even all of these causes united, though they have sometimes been assigned, will account for it in a satisfactory manner.

From any thing that can now be discovered, there is no great reason to conclude, that ever this country was very populous. Even in the earliest times, the splendid military exploits which they performed, were, in all probability, achieved rather by the intrepid spirit of the people, than by the influence of their numbers. The result of the general muster, as well as the number represented to have served at once in the intestine wars, seem evidently to have been the most extravagant exaggeration. Neither can the high rent given for the excise be justly considered as any proof of a more extensive consumption, arising from greater numbers of people, as this might have been occasioned, either from its being let by public auction, when there were many competitors, or from their being then less illicit trade, or more integrity among the dealers.

But, should we admit that the numbers were such as they have been represented, and that, instead of twenty-four, there were formerly a hundred thousand, a question would naturally arise, how did they then employ themselves ? from what source did they draw their subsistence ? and where did they find houses for their accommodation ? The castles and large houses that have been deserted, and are in ruins, are only those of Noltland, Carrickand, Newark in the North Isles, and those of Birsay and Kirkwall in the Mainland. For every little private house that has been demolished, there have been several erected in its stead through the whole islands ; and while the burgh of Kirkwall has added at least one fourth to the number of



its inhabitants within these fifty years, Stromness, the other principal town, has, during that period, increased in nearly a double proportion.

From the churches that are in ruins, no argument can be drawn, as they seem either to have been private chapels, built in the vicinity of gentlemen's houses, or places of worship destined for the convenience of old and infirm people ; and, were there number and dimensions accurately computed, they would, taken together, it is presumed, be found incapable of containing more people, than the parish churches do at present.

The means of supporting such numbers, could not have been derived from fishing, as that never seems to have been a favourite employment with the people ; since, when formerly it was prosecuted, in some instances, to a considerable extent, strangers, more frequently than natives carried it on. Neither could they, at that time, have had recourse for subsistence to agriculture, which could not be supposed to have been in a high state of perfection here, when it was so low in other parts of the kingdom, especially when its present state is considered ; and, for every acre of land now laid waste that was formerly cultivated, there are at least three that have been gained from a state of nature.

That country, which has neither fisheries nor agriculture to support its inhabitants, can have but little commerce ; and all the manufactures, of which these islands could boast of in former ages, will not, if taken together, bear a comparison with a single one of kelp, which employs the people only two months in the summer annually.

If these, and other considerations that might be mentioned, are carefully attended to, and impartially weighed, they will at least render it probable, that the number of people which occupied this province formerly, did not  
 1800. much exceed what are in it at the present time. But supposing this to have been the case, what reasons can be adduced for its not having increased in population, in the same proportion with other provinces in the kingdom ? The causes that have been already stated, as having an influence to diminish the numbers, may at least have contributed to render them stationary : and to these may be added one of great weight, namely, the want of a sufficient capital, liberally and judiciously applied. Had we a capital of this nature, together with a rational and manly spirit of liberty diffused among the  
 the



the people, no doubt can be entertained, that the population, instead of being retrograde, or even stationary, might increase to forty or fifty thousand in the course of a few generations. To such as are inclined to be sceptical on this point, we would hold up the many advantages of our situation, for embarking in all those branches of industry, in which the prosperity of a country consists.

For want of these branches of industry, many of our young people, dissatisfied with their situation, remove into other countries. Besides the sons of gentlemen, who can find no employment here, and who go abroad to engage in manufactures and commerce, to pursue liberal professions, and to serve their country in her fleets and armies, many of our young men of inferior station betake themselves to the merchant service, in the trade to the Baltic, to the East or West Indies, and to America, and particularly to the Greenland, Davis's Straits, and the Iceland fisheries. Some of these no doubt remit money home, from which their friends reap benefit; and sometimes they return themselves with the fruits of their industry: but, in general, when once they have been for any length of time abroad, both their money and their labours are henceforth lost to the place of their nativity.

Moreover, from the low state of agriculture, the smallness of the farms, and the little respect in which those connected with the cultivation of the soil are held, it has become the custom for too great a proportion of our young men to enter into the profession of tradesmen. Disgusted with the business which their fathers pursue, in which they have no prospect of obtaining either honour or emolument, they become masons, carpenters, tailors, shoemakers, and weavers; and, not finding the encouragement which they expected in their respective employments, when their apprenticeships are over, they very frequently leave this place, in the hopes of better in another country.

Besides these, many young women very often remove to Leith, Edinburgh, Newcastle, or London, where they soon get into good service, or are married, and never more return to reside in their own country.

We cannot calculate these different descriptions of people, who annually emigrate, and are either partially or totally lost to this place, below four



hundred. The whole of these, as it may well be supposed, are our most vigorous, spirited, and industrious young people, of both sexes; and this consideration alone is sufficient to show, what an incalculable loss such an yearly emigration must be to a remote province but thinly inhabited \*.

\* That the population now is much inferior to what it was in ancient times, appears, to the Editor, deducible from physical causes. These turbulent Earls expended all the produce of the land and sea, on the spot, in feeding a numerous host of vassals and partizans. They took an active interest in the cultivation of the land, as its produce was the pedestal of their greatness, by enabling them to support a more numerous band of followers. But they also extorted food, or what could be exchanged for food, from many potentates, either by predatory incursions, or in the shape of bribes to conciliate their forbearance. There is no doubt but their naval superiority gave them an advantage far superior to that which could be acquired by their numbers, as it enabled them to choose their point of attack, where they could acquire much booty, and commit much havoc, without great expenditure of their blood. Their predatory excursions were generally performed during the interval between sowing and reaping: and it is evident that while the chief and his vassals laboured to increase the produce of the land, and extorted plunder, or tribute from distant lands, all of which was expended in these islands, the population must have been proportioned to these enlarged means of subsistence.

In later times these circumstances have been reversed. The rents, and great part of the produce in the shape of rents, have been removed to other countries; while there were neither capitals, nor industry, at work to restore an equivalent. Hardly any improvements have been made in agriculture, or any extension of the cultivated surface, beyond what existed more than 500 years ago. The patches in cultivation, being perpetually dosed with the same crops, without either skilful rotation, or rest, have become a nursery of weeds; and, without cleaning, it is not possible for putrescent, or any manures, to restore them to the productiveness they must have formerly possessed. The constant and uninterrupted deterioration of the cultivated land, during so many centuries, must therefore be stated as a prominent cause of the decrease of population.

Our author has shewn, that the waste, or pasture lands, are not now under such good regulations as they were formerly. This must be stated as another cause of decreasing population, because, where animals are sent, not to feed, but to starve, and die of want, their owners cannot expect to reap much profit from them; and their want of profit diminishes the means of subsistence, and of population.—E,



## SECTION II.

## MANNERS AND CUSTOMS.

THE whole body of the inhabitants may be divided into three classes; the first of which is the gentry or proprietors of land, with such as have gained a competent fortune by means of industry; the second is composed of those who are denominated tradesmen and shopkeepers; and the third comprehends all such, as are for the most part employed in the cultivation of the soil, and are either farmers with their servants, or what are called *cottars*, or cottagers.

With regard to the *first class*, as many of them have had a liberal education, and some of them been bred to a correspondent profession, and besides have had an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the world, their manners cannot be supposed to be materially different from those of the same rank in other parts of the kingdom. Some peculiarities, however, there are in these Islands, as in every other place, that have an influence in forming the character. To such as are acquainted with its situation and circumstances, it will readily occur, that shipwrecks must sometimes happen, and that in seasons of severity the crops must fail, and disease cut off in numbers the cattle and horses; when feu-duties, however mercifully exacted, are felt as a heavy burden, as well as those taxes necessarily imposed for the support of Government. The losses sustained, and the exactions that are made on these occasions, have been alleged to have some effect in souring the temper of the inhabitants, and making them discontented with their condition.

Though attentive to their own interest, the proprietors are not so anxious as they ought to be, to excite or cherish a spirit of industry in their de-



pendants, nor do they always show a laudable zeal in setting them an example of what might ultimately redound to their own emolument. The illicit trade, that prevailed much till of late, has been thought to stamp a seriousness on the aspect of those even that had no immediate connexion with that pernicious business, to a degree that had too much the semblance of either diffidence, or suspicion and jealousy. To strangers, however, who occasionally visit them, and mean only to remain a short time, they appear open, affable, and cheerful; and, while they are polite without ceremony, they are extremely hospitable, and only show a little more reserve, and more jealousy of strangers that settle among them on account of business, than they discover of one another.

Personal and family differences must sometimes take place, wherever passions and interests interfere; and when those happen here (which they but too often do, they are rather augmented than diminished by time; and, as they cannot be extinguished by a free intercourse with mankind, they often prevent their cordially uniting together in support of any measure, however well calculated it may be, to promote the benefit of their country.

If at any time they engage in trade, and form connexions with other places, the success which many of them have had, shows plainly that they understood the method of transacting business; and with the persons, to whom they have acted as partners or agents, they have seldom or never failed to support the character of men of integrity.

But though they are faithful and affectionate in domestic life, honest in their public transactions, hospitable to strangers, charitable to the needy, and not only just but humane to their tenants and dependants, there appears, in the character of some of them, a deep and signal blemish; and that is, a supine indifference about religion. This is the more surprising, as they are distinguished for their good sense and literature, no less than for their decency and regularity of manners.

To say nothing of those that are still alive, any more than of those who have recently departed this life, we shall only name two natives, Sir Robert Strange and Mr. Mackenzie, whose works prove, that taste and genius may  
spring



spring up in the north, and contribute to the amusement, the safety, and the advantage of mankind \*.

But whatever may be thought of the characters of the men of the first class, there is one respect in which they are peculiarly fortunate; and that is, in the excellence of their female companions. While women of that rank in some places spend their time in attending to their dress, reading plays and novels, playing at cards and dice, and frequenting public places in parties of pleasure, ours reckon it their glory and happiness to devote their days to the faithful discharge of the relative and domestic duties. While they are young, they look up to the conduct of their mothers, which, in most instances, is a model of innocence, industry, and economy; and when they arrive at a more mature age, and have been educated, as they generally are, in those branches that become their station, they are proud to follow punctually the example that has been set them. They are on all occasions respectful and obedient to their parents, cheerful in their temper, and contented with their condition; and they are in every respect as affable, as they are innocent and modest in their manners. And when marriage connects them with another family, which, on account of the small number of men, but too seldom happens, they are no less distinguished for their attachment to their husbands, than they are for the prudent management of their house, and motherly affection for their children. Though their education, as in other places, is inferior to that of the men, their understandings are in general superior. They are alive to all the tender sensibilities, that mark and adorn their sex; and while the other sex, at least some of them, discover a culpable indifference, they show by their conduct, that they feel, in all their vigour, the warm, though rational sentiments of devotion.

Such are the manners of those that are of the first consideration of both sexes, taken in a general point of view, without entering into those little peculiarities, those nice and almost imperceptible shades which distinguish or mark the character of individuals.

\* Sir Robert Strange, the engraver; and Mr. Murdoch Mackenzie, author of the Nautical Surveys, so well known, and so much approved by mariners.



The *second class* consists of those that are denominated tradesmen and shopkeepers, who are here pretty numerous. If we examine this class with attention, and compare it with the preceding, the observation that has been sometimes made will be confirmed, that there is more virtue to be found among the middle rank of gentry, than in any other class in society.

Such as are engaged in traffic, or follow mechanical employments, reside, for the most part, in the two principal towns, only a few of them being scattered through the Islands. The traders, that live in the country, are decent, peaceable, industrious, honest people, who commonly unite the business of the farmer with that of the trader, and are of considerable benefit to their neighbours. The shopkeepers in Stromness, who have scarcely any opportunity of farming, are people of nearly the same description. Some, that carry on the retail trade in Kirkwall, are descended from respectable families, and are, besides, men of sense and education: they know how to purchase goods of the best quality, and at the best market; they have wisdom to preserve their credit, and integrity to induce them faithfully to serve their customers. Many, indeed, of late have commenced that business, who are as mean in point of birth as they are deficient in principle and education: their stock is small; their credit ill supported; their expences exceed their profit; their business is neglected; and, in this state of things, as it is easy to foresee, bankruptcy has frequently been the consequence.

The whole of the shopkeepers, almost without exception, are accused of taking exorbitant profits on all the articles in which they deal; and it must be confessed, that grocery goods of all sorts, calicoes, hardware, and, in short, whatever is disposed of in shops, is sold at a much higher price here than in most other places. But when it is considered that they must purchase all their commodities at a very distant market, and pay high freight, insurance, and other charges for their importation; and that, in order to answer the demand of a multitude of people, they are under the necessity of laying in a large stock at once, consisting of a variety of articles, which are often so long on hand as to be damaged or almost lost altogether,  
the



the charge will appear in a great measure unfounded, and their profits by no means so exorbitant and unreasonable.

The tradesmen that live in the country, as well as the little traders, have generally little farms, which are nearly an equal detriment to them and their employers, in so far as their attention is divided to such a degree between the two species of employment, that both are managed with little skill, and even frequently neglected. Although the mechanics in the burgh, whose attention is restricted to one line of business, have more dexterity in their respective professions, yet those in the country are often employed in preference, because they are more industrious and attentive.

The inhabitants of towns, but more especially those of royal burghs, from the many opportunities they have of assembling together, are in the most imminent danger of corrupting one another; and when this happens, the vices that are prevalent among them are idleness, gaming, drunkenness, combined sometimes, of late, with such a contempt of authority, as borders on sedition. From these vices, the incorporated trades here cannot be supposed to be altogether exempted; especially as they were, some years ago, accidentally brought into very peculiar circumstances. Three several times, during one parliament, Kirkwall happened to be not only the returning, but the deciding burgh, and the election in a great measure depended on the suffrages of the deacons; and as there were several rich and ambitious candidates, the consequences may easily be conjectured. The incorporated trades, vain with the attention and flattery which they had met with, and assuming consequence on account of the money they had lately received, began to form schemes, and adopt measures, which materially injured the poor's funds, and which, if allowed, might have ruined them.

The kirk-session, who are well known to be the legal administrators of these funds, alarmed at this, warmly remonstrated, as they were bound in duty, and made many fair offers of accommodation, for the sake of peace, though without effect; and, every attempt to settle matters amicably proving unsuccessful, through their obstinacy, an appeal was made to the law, as the last resource. The Supreme Court, after a very full discussion of the points in question, found the incorporation liable in the whole expences incurred, and ordained them to give up the subject in dispute, as detri-



mental to the poor of the place. Enraged at the kirk-session for entering into this process, to which the insolence of the incorporations, as well as their own duty, compelled them, they abandoned the established church, on pretence of not finding seats to their mind, and formed themselves into a separate religious society,—a new phenomenon in this country.

Before this event took place, they had been sometimes accused of want of skill in their respective trades; they had been represented as inattentive to their words and their engagements, and very extravagant in their demands of wages; but though these charges should be admitted to have some foundation, they are counterbalanced by several valuable qualities. Formerly, at least, they were social among themselves, cheerful in their tempers, obliging, and moderately industrious. No people of their rank could excel them in the decency of their appearance and dress, show more respect to their superiors, or contentment with their condition. Their country, both in its civil and religious institutions, had a large share of their regard; and they were never wanting in a becoming attention to the public duties of religion.

The *third class* of inhabitants contains all those that are in any respect connected with the cultivation of the land, such as farmers, with their servants and cottagers; and all these taken together, may be considered as making about eight-tenths of the whole population. From this number must be deducted such gentlemen as farm a considerable part of their own estates, as well as those farmers that occupy a large proportion of the lands of others. The remainder, comprehending the great body of that order, consists of men who are in general poor, having very little stock, and depending for the most part on *steelbow*, which is a certain number of horses and cattle, with a quantity of corn and provender, which the tenant receives on his entry to the farm, and delivers at his removal, and which belongs to the proprietor. Their farms are small in comparison of those in Scotland, as they seldom exceed forty acres of arable land, with a suitable proportion of waste ground for pasture; and, at an average, they are not above twenty acres, with a similar appendage. The rents are almost always paid in kind; and, what is still worse, arbitrary services are still exacted in several instances. Few of them, comparatively speaking,  
have



have leases, and the few leases are only of very short duration, so that they can attempt no sort of improvement; but although most of them are tenants at will, they are not in a worse condition than others, as they are very seldom removed from their little possessions. So much, indeed, is this the case, that there are many, who at this moment occupy the very same farms that were held by their fathers, grandfathers, and great-grandfathers.

Mean as this condition of farmers may appear in the eyes of those that have been accustomed to behold a substantial and independent tenantry, that class of people denominated *cottars* are in a still much worse condition. To understand this it must be observed, that, connected with almost every large farm, there are some cottages, to every one of which a garden is annexed, with as much grass and corn land as will pasture a cow or two in summer, and furnish for them provender in winter. Poor families reside in these cottages, who are understood to hold them of the person who occupies the principal farm, to whom they are entirely subjected. He may remove them at pleasure; and, as a rent for their little farm, may call them to labour for him at any time of the year, and at any sort of employment. Moreover, their children, as soon as they become fit for labour, must work for him in the capacity of servants, for what he reckons reasonable wages; and if at any time they refuse, the parents, at the next term, may be expelled from their habitations.

This, though an unfavourable, is a just view of the condition of that class of people; and, in the contemplation of it, we cannot help wishing that their situation might be rendered less dependent. But while we lament the unhappy circumstances in which a large portion of our fellow-creatures is still situated, it is proper to observe that their condition is no worse than that of many poor cottagers about thirty or forty years ago, through various parts of Scotland.

The circumstances of both farmers and cottars will clearly point out their respective leading and general character. They are in a high degree indolent; wedded to old customs; averse to every improvement; dark, artful, interested; respectful to their superiors, as much from fear as from love and suspicion; sometimes endeavouring to undermine and slander one another.



another. These foibles, defects, and vices, are blended, however, with some good qualities and amiable virtues. In point of sagacity and understanding they are equal to those of the same station in almost any other place. They are faithful in the observance of the marriage vow, and kind to their children; honest in their transactions with one another, though negligent in the payment of their rents. Their tempers are mild and peaceable; and though, in prosperity, their hearts are not apt to overflow with gratitude, in trouble they suffer with patience, and devout resignation to the will of Heaven. Their religion is taught them in the utmost purity and simplicity; and though it leans a little to the side of superstition, yet it restrains them from criminal indulgence, and inspires them with the love of virtue.

Notwithstanding the many hardships to which they are subject, the farmers are far from being so unhappy as might be imagined, for they in general receive much kind treatment from their landlords. Instead of being turned out from caprice or resentment, as sometimes happens elsewhere, so long as they incline to continue, they are seldom removed. Their rents have not been raised for these hundred years; and when they sink into poverty from want of health, the death of horses or cattle, or the failure of crops, the proprietors of their farms humanely furnish them with the necessary articles, till the return of more prosperous days.

Their servants, however, are, in almost every respect, in a more eligible condition. A remarkable change has taken place in their situation, in the course of a few years. Formerly, their food was coarse and scanty, and their wages so small, that only a very little could be afforded for purchasing clothing; and, if they had families very little for their support, and nothing for their education. They have now plenty of substantial and wholesome food; and as their wages have at the same time increased upwards of fourfold, both they and their families are not only better fed, but better lodged, and better clothed. And as their industry has not increased in proportion, the price of labour, though nominally low, is believed to be now nearly as high in this place, as in most others through the kingdom. To this melioration of their state, various causes have contributed, of which the demand for men to serve in the fleets and armies during the late wars, and the



the great encouragement given for engaging in the fisheries and the merchant service, may be stated as the principal.

This happy change in the lot of such a large portion of our species, would give pleasure to every benevolent heart, did they themselves seem sensible of the benefit, and, under its influence, conduct themselves with any degree of gratitude and moderation. So far, however, is this from being the case, that it is generally agreed that they show, in almost every instance, less regard to the interest of their masters, and the performance of their duty; are more idle, more dissipated, and neither so submissive nor respectful in their behaviour.

Like the rest of the lower class, they are awkward in most of their operations, and so fettered by old customs, that they show the most marked aversion to every sort of improvement; and as they are seldom or never required, on entering into new service, to produce certificates of their fidelity to their last masters, they are by no means so anxious as they ought to be, to preserve a fair and industrious character.

In short, the servants, male as well as female, are somewhat ignorant and careless, giddy, self-conceited, and even petulant, so long as they remain at home; but as soon as they remove into another country, and mingle with those of their own rank, and are under proper regulations, they often distinguish themselves as faithful, active, and skilful in their respective employments.

If suitable regulations with regard to servants were framed, and the gentlemen united to enforce them, they would soon be much better served. Their tenants would find far less difficulty in cultivating the ground; and even the servants themselves would soon improve so much, in many respects, under their influence, as to be far more happy in their condition.

The character drawn of the whole inhabitants at an early period, is still in some measure applicable. They are tall, robust, and well proportioned in their persons; their countenances fair and florid; and, from the simplicity of their food and of their manners, they commonly live to a great age, little impaired either in their minds or bodies\*. In one respect, they differ

\* Polyd. Virgil. Hæst. Boeth.



from what they were formerly, since sobriety now stands almost first in the list of their virtues \*. About half a century ago, an intelligent native thus justly drew their character.

‘ Most of the gentry, or better sort, finishing their education at Edinburgh, affect the manners and customs of that place. A character given of them by historians many years ago, that they were great drinkers, but not drunkards, is in some measure true still, though the practice of excessive drinking has been much laid aside within these few years. They are generally kind without carefing, civil without ceremony, and respectful without compliment ; their resentments of obligations and injuries are more quick than perceptible ; they are obliging and hospitable to strangers, and, where no party differences intervene, social and friendly among themselves. But artful endeavours to undermine the measures and interests of each other, from slight causes, have, for several years bygone, destroyed the harmony and mutual intercourse of beneficence, which would have otherwise taken place ; diverted their attention from improving the ground by better methods of husbandry, and obstructed the introduction of some useful arts and branches of commerce, which might be advantageously carried on from thence. It is remarkable, however, that their animosities seldom or never break out into personal insults or abusive language, either openly or in private. On public occasions, or when business requires it, they meet together freely, join in conversation, and always behave civilly to each other.

‘ The commonalty are healthy, hardy, well-shaped, subject to few diseases, and capable of an abstemious and laborious life at the same time ; but, for want of profitable employment, flow at work, and many of them inclined to idleness. In sagacity and natural understanding, they are inferior to few of the commons in Britain : sparing of their words, reserved in their sentiments, especially of what seems to have a connexion with their interest ; apt to magnify or aggravate their losses, and studious to conceal or diminish their gains : tenacious of old customs, though never so inconvenient ; averse to new, till recommended by some

\* Buchanan, Hist. Scot.

‘ successful



‘ successful examples, among their own rank and acquaintance, and then  
‘ universally keen to imitate : honest in their dealings with one another,  
‘ but not so scrupulous with respect to the master of the ground, often  
‘ running deeply in arrears to him, while they punctually clear credit with  
‘ every one else. These, and some other singularities, may be ascribed to  
‘ the absurd and impolitic custom of short leases, racked-rents, and high  
‘ entries, which prevail in other parts as well as here. Theft and other  
‘ crimes are concealed, even by those who have sustained the injury, from  
‘ an opinion, that it is a degree of guilt in a private person to become the  
‘ voluntary instrument of another’s sufferings; and that the imprecations  
‘ of the afflicted, though suffering by the hand of justice, are followed  
‘ with visible judgments. They are dexterous at the oar and manage-  
‘ ment of boats; and when they betake themselves to the sea, make sober,  
‘ honest, and expert sailors. Though in the neighbourhood of the High-  
‘ lands of Scotland, yet they have none of those manners and customs  
‘ for which the Highlanders are remarkable; but such as resemble those  
‘ of the southern, rather than of the northern part of the kingdom.  
‘ Their religion is Presbyterian, without bigotry, enthusiasm, or zeal; and  
‘ without dissenters, excepting a very few of the episcopal persuasion. The  
‘ mirth, diversions, and mutual entertainments of the Christmas and  
‘ other holidays are still continued, though the devotion of them be quite  
‘ forgot.’

Many of the customs of this place have been already mentioned, and others will naturally fall under our consideration in a subsequent part of this work. The few, therefore, that shall be mentioned at present, are such only as appear to be illustrative of character and manners.

From the long residence of the bishops among them, both before and since the Reformation, no less than from the splendid external show in the Episcopal worship, such a deep impression has been made by Episcopacy on the minds of the people, that more than a century has not been able to efface it. To many of the old places of worship, therefore, especially such as have been dedicated to particular favourite saints, they still pay much veneration, visiting them frequently, when they are serious,



melancholy, or in a devout mood, repeating within their ruinous walls, prayers, paternosters, and forms of words, of which they have little knowledge. When they consider themselves in any imminent danger, they invoke the aid of these saints, and vow to perform services, or present oblations to them, on condition that they interpose successfully in their behalf; and they are generally very punctual in performing these vows.

Some days of the week are fortunate to begin any business of importance; others would spoil it completely; and, in this respect, even some months are much preferable to others. Thursdays and Fridays are the days in which they incline to marry; and they anxiously and scrupulously avoid doing it at any other time than when the moon is waxing. If they kill cattle, they must also do it during the growing of that luminary; from an idea, that if delayed till the waning, the meat will be of an inferior quality. In preparing for a voyage, when leaving the shore, they always turn their boats in the direction of the sun's motion; and in some places they never fail to utter a short prayer on such occasions.

The festivals in the Romish kalendar are observed with the most studious care, not indeed as times of religious worship, but as days exempted from labour, and devoted to feasting and conviviality. On some of these days they must be allowed to be entirely idle; on others they will engage a little in some kinds of work. One while they must go a-fishing, another they carefully abstain from that sort of employment: now they must eat fish, now flesh; now eggs, milk, and so on, as the particular day or season directs them.

Like the common people in most other places, they are extremely credulous, and put entire confidence in men of high pretensions, which leads them, as often as they have occasion to take advice with respect to the state of their mind, their body, or their affairs, to trust quacks in every line, rather than men that have been regularly bred, and are distinguished for their good sense and education. The same credulous spirit leads them to put faith in all the absurd and ridiculous tales, which are so often circulated, concerning witches, fairies, &c.; and consequently subjects them to be imposed upon by all such as pretend to deal with familiar spirits.

Hence,



Hence, the multitude of charms that are still in practice, for killing sparrows that destroy the early corn; expelling mice and rats that infest houses; for securing the successful brewing of ale, and churning of milk; as well as those that respect women in labour and marriage; and those that are made use of for procuring good luck, curing the diseases of sheep, horses, and black-cattle, and driving away toothach, hæmorrhagy, consumption, and other distempers.

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### CHAP. III.

#### INDUSTRY.

IT is matter of much regret, that the inhabitants of this country are very deficient in industry, not so much from any want of capacity, advantages of situation, or of materials, as from the want of capital, employed in such a manner, as would excite that spirit of enterprise, which alone can give industry birth.

The rents of the largest estates are drawn by men who do not reside in the Islands, and are in a great measure spent in another country, to the no small detriment of that in which they are produced; or, if they are not carried out of the Islands, they have hitherto been spent in luxury, or diverted to such purposes, as have produced no beneficial effect to the community. In like manner, the money that has been gained by commerce has either lain dormant, or taken a wrong direction: and the same may with justice be said of what has arisen from manufactures, of which at least one branch has been productive far beyond the most sanguine expectation. The small proprietors, however much disposed, can contribute nothing to promote this desirable object, on account of the expensive mode of living which has of late been introduced, as well as of the heavy burthen of feu-duties, under which they have from time immemorial groaned.



Hence, though other provinces in our extensive empire are advancing rapidly in different branches of industry, we are, notwithstanding the advantages of our situation, more than a century behind many around us, in whatever can advance our prosperity. This will appear but too evident, if we consider our total want of fisheries, though our coasts abound with fish in vast numbers, and of the best quality; if we take a view of the scanty portion of commerce that has yet been carried on, of the mean condition of our manufactures, one only excepted, and particularly of the low state of agriculture in comparison of what it is in most other parts.

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#### SECTION I.

#### AGRICULTURE.

NOTWITHSTANDING the excellence of agriculture is very generally admitted, it has in many countries rather followed as the effect, than preceded as the cause of other branches of industry, the reasons of which have been satisfactorily explained by Smith, in his *Wealth of Nations*. Besides those which are common to this with other provinces, there are others of a peculiar nature, that have had influence in obstructing the progress of this useful art; and these have operated either in ancient times, or more recently, according as circumstances have occurred.

While this country was subject to the Crown of Norway, and the contests that so often arose among the different candidates for the earldom remained, landed property could not be secure or fixed, and its fluctuating state at that period must have had an effect in preventing the cultivation of the ground. Neither does property seem to have been more permanent, for some time at least, after it came under the Scottish monarchs: and though, by this change, it acquired more stability, agriculture would reap little advantage, as the farmers, stewards, and chamberlains, who represented or served his Majesty, would naturally be looked up to as patterns;



patterns ; and they had no such interest in the land, as to induce them to engage in its improvement.

The Earls of Morton, availing themselves of the influence which they had with their respective Sovereigns, obtained a grant of it for the support of their families ; and seem, whatever might have been their pretensions, to have had no other views, than to collect the rents as usual in kind, and apply them in the best manner that they could to their own use. Involved in contests of a troublesome and vexatious nature with the inhabitants, which an estate, consisting of feu-duties, seldom fails to produce, they disposed of their irredeemable right to a respectable commoner, who made the purchase, unquestionably not so much with the design of promoting agriculture, as to aggrandize his family, by increasing his political influence in the state.

Besides (what has perhaps had more influence than all the other causes united, in retarding this species of industry) any little stock or capital which had been the fruit of labour, or the savings of care, was generally applied to that destructive illicit trade which has never failed to prove the ruin of every country where it has been extensively followed. Instead of laying out any little money that could have been spared, in improving the soil, the people, in the prospect of more immediate, as well as of greater gain, with little or no labour, sent it to foreign markets, to purchase wine, brandy, gin, &c. ; which were imported sometimes in foreign bottoms, and sometimes in vessels of their own ; and retailed at such a low price, and in such quantities, as was equally subversive of industry and of morals. This was the more remarkable, as it was carried on to the greatest extent, at the very time when the cultivation of the land became an object of attention to all ranks in Scotland, who united their endeavours, cordially and vigorously, in the prosecution of an improvement that was justly considered as equally conducive to the interest of individuals and to the benefit of the State.

From the earliest ages, the people have been in the custom of using turf or peat for firing ; which, as the peat mosses, in many places, are almost exhausted, is every year becoming more difficult to be procured. Several of the islands, too, are entirely destitute of peat mosses, to furnish the  
necessary



necessary fuel ; which must, in that case, be procured from those around them ; and, as the friths are in some places broad, and the tides rapid, this is done at great trouble and expence. The time spent in procuring peat, if coal were used as a substitute, (as it might be perhaps at less expence), could be employed in preparing manure, cleaning the ground by a fallow, or in raising green crops ; and this way of spending the latter part of summer would be more advantageous than that in which it has hitherto been employed.

The other part of the summer has, for these eighty years past, been, for the most part, employed in a manufacture of kelp, highly advantageous indeed, not only to the proprietors, but to their tenants, and even, in some measure, to the people at large ; but as it occupies, for the space of more than two months, those hands which the ground stands so much in need of, and might have otherwise occupied, it may be considered as among the causes that have retarded this most excellent and useful art.

But, whatever may have been the causes that diverted the attention of the people to other objects, the effects on the agriculture are but too certainly bad, as will appear from a view of its present state.

In counties that are regular in their boundaries, it is easy to ascertain the extent of their surface, in miles, acres, or any other determinate measure ; but here that is not the case, for the limits are extremely irregular ; and, besides, an exact survey of the whole Islands has never yet been made. A conjecture, however, not perhaps very wide of the truth, has been formed, that they contain a hundred and fifty thousand acres, which may be divided in the following proportions.

Between the hill-dikes, which are a sort of very imperfect turf fences, erected for the purpose of keeping cattle, is a quantity of heathy, marshy, or green ground, possessed as a common, amounting to about

|                                |   |   |   |   |   |   |        |
|--------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|--------|
| In field pasture and meadow    | - | - | - | - | - | - | 30,000 |
| Land in tillage                | - | - | - | - | - | - | 24,000 |
| Occupied by houses and gardens | - | - | - | - | - | - | 2,000  |
| Fresh water                    | - | - | - | - | - | - | 4,000  |

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150,000

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Through



Through that extent, almost every variety of soils occurs; and the soils are frequently so intermixed, that several of them may be met with at no great distance from one another. The most common are sand, brick clay, loam, and a mixture of peat-moss, which are in general of no great depth; as rock or *till*\* often lye only a foot or two beneath the surface, and sometimes still nearer; so that the latter is in danger of being turned up, and the former of impeding or breaking the plough.

The instruments made use of in agriculture are, in many respects, but ill calculated for the purpose. The plough, that was formerly universal, and is still in common use, has only one stilt, with neither wrest nor mould-board; and its other parts are joined in such a form, that it has not a single quality to recommend it, but its simplicity and the low price at which it can be purchased. From its construction, it is only fitted to scratch the surface two or three inches deep, and scatter the clods around it, without touching the best part of the earth, or turning it up to the salutary influence of the sun and air. This awkward tool is commonly drawn by three or four horses abreast, with the driver moving backward before them; which not only poaches the wet land, and beats down the dry, but justles and fatigues the poor animals that go in the middle, and renders their labour in a great measure useless.

The defects of the plough are but ill supplied by their harrow, which consists of only two or three bulls, in which are inserted only short wooden teeth, and which is drawn by one ox or horse, by means of ropes fixed to the corners. If the soil be of a sandy nature, or somewhat loose and crumbling, such a harrow may answer the purpose intended; but in one that consists mostly of clay, is wet, and of a firm texture, it can have but very little influence in pulverizing the ground, and will also cover the seed but very imperfectly.

In many places, the land would reap much advantage from the use of the roller, judiciously applied, in some seasons; though it is scarcely yet ranked among our implements of husbandry.

Most of the arable lands that are to be cultivated by these utensils are uninclosed, and lye exposed, in their wet state, to be poached by cattle,

\* Schistose clay.



and torn up by swine into holes and ditches; and as draining is unknown, and no other mode of forming ridges has yet been adopted than cleaving and gathering alternately, the fields are often drenched and soaked with stagnant water during the whole winter.

Harvest and winter ploughing they disapprove of, on account, as they pretend, of the water's carrying off the soil when ploughed at these seasons. But this objection can have no weight, as most of the lands are situated on gentle declivities. The true reason seems to be, that indolence, which has not yet suffered it to become the custom, to which, in most things, the ordinary farmers are in the most abject slavery\*.

They usually begin to plough about Candlemas, O. S., when they plough their oat-land, into which they throw the seed two or three weeks afterwards; and when this finished, the bear-land begins to be stirred and harrowed, and commonly receives the seed near the end of May, immediately after it has been manured and got the seed-furrow. Bear or bigg, and black and grey oats, are the only grains that are commonly raised; and these succeed each other invariably, and without any intermission; and this seems to have been the practice for centuries. Rotation of crops has never yet entered into their thoughts, any more than change of seed of the same species; and (what is much worse) in many places, they are so far from thinking it proper to select the best part of their grain to preserve for seed, that they entertain the absurd opinion that the very worst kind of it will do equally well for that purpose.

Though there is plenty of limestone in many parts, and, in some situations, plenty of excellent peat to burn it, so that it could be procured at no great expence, it is not yet used as a manure. The same indifference prevails with regard to marl†, which is found in many places; in some,

\* There being no ditches, or drains, to take off superficial moisture, the land is commonly so much soaked during winter, that it cannot be ploughed. This operation they are obliged to defer until the moisture is evaporated by the heat of spring, or summer.—E.

† Shell marl is produced by small shell-fishes, which live in fresh water. It abounds in various parts of the Orkneys; but is not used by the people, except for whitening the walls of their houses. Clay marl is also very frequent.—Great quantities of shell-sand also occur, and would prove an excellent calcareous manure; but the people are prejudiced against its use, because, in many cases, it is blown by the wind, and destroys land by its excess.—A quantity of these small fragments of sea-shells, selected at random, from the links westward of Melfetter, was found to contain of carbonate of lime,  $85\frac{1}{2}$  in 100. Its other ingredients were sand and animal albumen.—E.



on the surface of the ground, and in others at only a small depth, abundant in quantity, and excellent in quality. Even the dung of animals, which is generally considered as the very best manure, they regard as of an inferior kind, and of little importance, in comparison of sea-weed, on which they bestow most of their attention.

This substance consists of a variety of marine plants, torn off from the rocks by the force of the sea and the weather, and driven ashore, in winter and spring, in great quantities. In some places, it is carried up from the strand immediately, and laid, while it is yet fresh, on the land intended to produce bear that season; and in other places, it is laid up in a heap, to ferment and putrefy till the spring; when it is spread on the bear-land, either immediately before or after it is stirred, or receives the first ploughing. The effect which it produces is nearly immediate, and almost certain, whenever it is applied in a proper state and in sufficient quantity; and, in whatever way it acts, it seems to continue only for one year; and the bear raised by it is generally believed to be small, thick in the husk, and in every respect of a bad quality\*.

From the account we have given, it is easy to conceive that the crops cannot be very luxuriant. Accordingly, three times the quantity of seed sown, or, in other words, three seeds for oats, and five for bear, may be stated as the average produce; nor will this appear strange, as not only both kinds of grain are sown uncommonly thick, but horses, cattle, sheep, swine, geese, are in many places never kept from the corn fields till the month of June, and are even suffered to pay them many occasional and expensive visits through the summer and harvest. To account for this, it must be observed, that, in most of the Islands, the lands on the sea-shore only are property, and those in the middle or the internal parts are occupied as common-lands by the whole island. To divide these lands from one another,

\* It would be a great improvement to mix their sea-weeds into composts with moss, which would suit every soil except what is mossy. Or they might compost them with clay-marl, or rich earth, adding shell-marl, or the sand of sea-shells.—But the barbarous practice of paring off the best turf, in order to mix with their dung, which has destroyed much good land in Orkney, ought to be prohibited under the severest penalties.—This is subjecting the soil to the martyrdom of Saint Bartholomew, in being flead alive.—E.



and around this common\*, a very imperfect turf fence was erected, at a very early period, and kept in repair from year to year by those who have farms adjacent. A little before the middle of summer, all the horses are driven into this common, most of the geese, and swine, and sheep, and also the young cattle, with an intention of being grazed, without the expence of employing people to keep them; and as every person claims the privilege of sending as many of these animals as he finds convenient, the pasture soon becomes so exhausted, that hunger forces them over the feeble mud wall, into the middle of the fields of corn, which they frequently destroy.

As soon as the harvest commences, which is commonly about the beginning or middle of September, they begin to cut down their crop, and almost always before it be ripe, from fear of its being hurt by bad weather, or consumed by the cattle of their neighbours.

The instruments made use of for this purpose, are not the ordinary kind of sickles, but a sort of broad, blunt hooks, that take much time in sharpening; and when the corn is short, which often happens, instead of cutting, pluck it up by the roots, and by that means mix with it a quantity of earth or sand, from which it is afterwards separated with much difficulty. Their method of binding the sheaves, which has probably been adopted on account of the wetness of the climate in harvest, is the same that is called *gating*† in the south of Scotland; and were they bound again after they are sufficiently dry, as they are in that country, it would be deserving of much approbation. In place of this, however, the corn, in its loose state, is piled up in what are called *screws*, on the land first, and then carried home into the farm-yard, where it is built in small stacks, from which it is carried by degrees into the barn; thrashed in the ordinary way; winnowed between the doors without fanners, which are unknown; dried on kilns, always built adjoining to the barns, and in mills, to which almost all the lands are *thirled* or *afstricted*; and converted into meal, the oats for the twelfth, and the bear for the sixteenth part, as *multure*.

\* Unless these commons be divided, and runrig possessions abolished, agricultural improvements are impracticable.—E.

† The sheaf is tied loosely near the top, and set on the bottom spread out, to dry.



The farms are in general small, seldom much exceeding forty, and sometimes only eight or ten acres, which is thought sufficient to employ one plough, exclusively of a correspondent quantity of grass-ground intended for pasture.

Steelbow is still very common, which is well known to be a certain number, quantity, or value of horses, cattle and corn, delivered to the tenant on his entering to the farm, and which he is bound to repay when he leaves it. This custom, however proper it might have been at first, as founded on the state of the country, experience daily shows is attended with several very palpable inconveniences. Among these may be reckoned, the opportunity it gives to men, who have little or no stock, and who might be more usefully employed in other branches, to become farmers; the temptation it holds out to induce them to violate honesty, and to be indolent, which with us is but too often the case.

Every custom and practice here seems to be prejudicial to farming. Many of the lands that belong to the same proprietor, as well as those that are the property of different proprietors, are blended together in what is called *runrig*; and this most absurd intermixture, it is well known, is not only the source of perpetual contestation, but an insuperable bar to every kind of improvement. Few of the ordinary class of tenants have leases, but are tenants at will, who pay their rents in corn for their arable ground, and in butter for their pasture, together with a few services, which are far from being rigorously exacted.

As most of their farms lye on the sea-shore, they have commonly a certain portion of the adjacent rocks allotted them, from which they cut the *tang* or sea-weed, and manufacture it into kelp, and for their trouble, receive thirty, forty, or fifty shillings the ton. If they had not this method of paying part of the rents of their farms, they would soon become insolvent, not because the rents have been raised, but because servants wages have risen rapidly; and the advance on the price of ropes, wood, and iron, which a farm necessarily requires, is not less considerable.

In some places, especially such as are on creeks and bays, or at some distance from the shore, their method of procuring manure is a little different from that already stated. Instead of laying ware and dung separately



rately on the land, as is the practice in general, they mix them in certain proportions, together with earth, soil, or vegetable mould, dug from the grass-ground for that purpose. Their plan of forming this compost is by no means injudicious. A stratum of earth is laid in the bottom, on which is placed dung, and then earth, on which is thrown ware or sea-weed, and so on till the dunghill be completed. The only faults in this mode seem to be, that these dunghills are too small; the materials do not remain long enough in this state of combination; and they are neither trenched nor turned over, so as to admit the influence of the air, the more effectually to promote fermentation\*.

But supposing no objection could, in any respect, be made to the preparing of this manure, a very strong one lies against the way of procuring one of its materials. It is almost impossible to conceive any custom more destructive, than that of tearing off the surface of a quantity of grass ground, in order to lay it on arable land, which is sometimes not so valuable as the earth which they thus use as an ingredient in the manure; and yet this custom is still prevalent over the most of the country. Extensive fields may be seen of these *berried* (or robbed) lands, as they are here very properly denominated, where the soil has been taken off, and nothing left but the rock, the sand, or the gravel, on which neither corn nor grass will ever grow without an extravagant expence of time and labour; whereas, had they been suffered to remain in their first state, they could easily have been rendered fit to have produced both in abundance. In some estates, the proprietors have wisely, of late, prohibited this most absurd and pernicious practice; in others, they are still so blind to their own interest, or so supinely negligent about the land, as entirely to overlook it, and allow their tenants to go on stripping the face of the earth. Some errors are of such a nature as to affect the interest of individuals only, and these may be taken notice of and corrected by themselves; but this is of such a complexion, that, while it hurts the interest of the proprietors, it also materially injures the public; and is therefore an object of such moment as to merit legal prohibition.

\* Where moss is used for compost, turning, and throwing water upon it, powerfully promotes its putrefaction. Foul water, and what oozes from stables and dunghills, answers best.—E.



In some parishes, the instruments of agriculture are much more perfect than those which we have already mentioned. A plough with two stils, and nearly in the same form with that used in the south of Scotland, and harrows with four bulls and iron teeth, drawn by one corner, have succeeded the imperfect instruments; and where this has been the case, as in Waes and South Ronaldshay for example, the crops are more luxuriant, and the grain of a superior quality. Some few of the tenants, too, have leases of seven, fourteen, or even nineteen or twenty-one years; but those that have them of such duration, commonly farm whole estates, or large tracts of land, with a great number of small tenants or cottars under them, and keep in their own hands only one pretty large farm, on which they have, in some few instances, made attempts at improvement. These attempts, though meriting praise, are trifling, however, in comparison of such as have been made by gentlemen, who have found it convenient to reside on their own estates, and farm a part of their own property. Their improvements (some of them at least) are as substantial as they are judicious, and afford a proof, that the same mode of husbandry will succeed here, that has been adopted and followed in better cultivated countries. As some of them, indeed, have been made on an extensive scale, and at an expence far beyond the reach of ordinary tenants, they may have attracted attention, and excited surprise, but they have not as yet produced much imitation. If ever the ordinary kind of tenants be induced to adopt any rational plan of improvement, which is an event devoutly to be wished for, it must be in consequence of imitating neither proprietors, nor even extensive and opulent tenants, but men in their own line, and very little raised above them in point of circumstances.

If the proprietors were to consider it as their interest (as it seems evidently to be) to improve the face of their country, they would perhaps select from their own tenants some of the most substantial, judicious, and faithful; grant them leases of considerable length, and require only money rent, of lands connected together, properly defined and favourably situated, to be enclosed and improved under covenant; and if success crowned the endeavours of these experimental farmers, and they were treated with distinction, or held in respect, there could be little doubt, that in a few years  
their



their steps would be followed by their most intelligent and spirited neighbours. In case any difficulty occurred in finding men among their tenants qualified to undertake the charge of such a business, the measure would perhaps succeed still better, if a few farmers were brought for that purpose from a better cultivated country.

It is in vain to urge, as has been done frequently by ignorance devoted to old and absurd custom, that the soil and climate of this place will not admit of the same mode of agriculture that has been followed with such beneficial effects elsewhere. To show the fallacy of this opinion, many striking instances could be brought, from which we shall only select the following. A gentleman who was an advocate for improvement, enclosed, with a good fence, a quantity of land which was poor and barren, and which (except a small patch in the middle) had never before been cultivated. The people around gazed with surprize at his conduct, which they considered as bordering on madness. The land was however broken up, and treated in all respects the same way as lands of that kind are commonly in farming counties; when it produced, at no great expence of labour, three several excellent crops of oats. After being cleared of weeds, it had a pretty plentiful coat of manure, and was laid to grass with bear and grass seeds, when it produced fifteen bolls for every one of seed, of the former; and of the latter, two hundred and fifty stone of excellent hay per acre the year following.

The experience of several gentlemen, who have deserted the old track, and discovered spirit in improving their farms in the new method, could without doubt furnish many similar instances.

From what has been stated, it is easy to conceive, that weeds must long ago have quite overrun the lands; and, indeed, so much is this the case, that were a stranger to inspect them in the month of June, he would conclude that no other crop was intended to be produced on them. Some of them are perennial, and others only of one or two years duration; and they are never, in the usual mode of farming, prevented from injuring the grain by robbing it of its food, and impeding the free circulation of the air.

Summer-



Summer-fallowing, which has been practised of late on some gentlemen's farms, though not in the very best method, has had much effect in rooting out the annuals ; but no attempts whatever have yet been made to extirpate the perennials.

The gentlemen have generally their farms enclosed, and divided with substantial stone fences. Ditches have also been introduced of late ; and, in a wet climate, they cannot fail to be an useful improvement. Hedges have scarcely yet been tried, though they would be of much use in the way of shelter ; but could never succeed, even on the supposition that the climate was favourable, unless sheep, swine, and cattle were carefully kept from them \*.

The gentlemen farmers have thrown aside the one-filted plough, as well as the wooden-teethed harrows, as instruments of no utility ; and constantly use such as are employed in the low countries in the south of Scotland, viz. the plough drawn by two horses or two oxen, without a driver, and the harrows loosely joined together in pairs, drawn also by two horses. Disregarding the common opinion that winter-ploughing is detrimental, they do not scruple to cultivate the ground at all seasons ; and most of them are so far from thinking their interest is thereby hurt, that they imagine they have reaped from it a signal benefit. Instead of confining themselves to raise only the ordinary crops of black oats and bear, together with a few potatoes, they have, after the land has been duly prepared for the respective crops, not only white and red oats, but peas, barley, and even sometimes a little wheat and rye ; and tares, lucerne, turnips, clover and rye-grass in the greatest abundance, and of the very best quality. These indeed have not all succeeded equally well ; nor could it be expected ; as they are neither equally congenial to our soil and climate, nor could our people be supposed, on their first introduction, to be so well acquainted with their management.

\* At Melfetter it has been ascertained that furze fences thrive very well, even when exposed to the blasts from the sea. They should be sown on a mound of earth, thrown up from a ditch, which is faced with stone, and surmounted by a Galloway coping. Such fences would serve the double purpose of draining and shelter.—E.



Several kinds of white oats have been tried repeatedly, and particularly those from Blainlee, which have been supposed to accommodate themselves to every situation; and all of them have degenerated in a few years, if we except what are called the red oats, which, of all the sorts, seem best adapted to this climate. They neither dwindle down to a small size, nor are they apt to shake; nor are they late in ripening like the other kinds, but have produced large crops for several years successively.

The different kinds of peas have also been sown, but not with the like success; for while the *grey* have seldom or never ripened, and only produced straw (which they often do in abundance), the *white* have for the most part yielded an excellent crop.

Few attempts have yet been made to raise either rye or wheat; nor will ever the latter be produced in any considerable quantity, till proper mills are built for making flour. The winters are by no means severe, either in respect of hard frosts, or of snows that are deep and lasting; and the soil, in many places, has every appearance of being calculated to produce this grain in some perfection. Much money, as well as many of the commodities of this place, are annually sent southwards, for purchasing flour and biscuit; and all these might be saved, and even money gained, by furnishing these articles to the shipping that frequents our coasts, were the attention of the people once turned to the production of this most valuable commodity. An objection perhaps might be started to this species of production, from the frequent rains that prevail during the winter; but these are, it is probable, not more abundant here than in some of the counties on the east coast, that are distinguished for the excellence of this production. And were even the quantity proved to be greater, so as to be pernicious, the objection might in some measure be removed by a proper attention being paid to soil and situation\*.

If

\* It is not long since Sweden was supplied with wheaten flour from Pomerania, and Poland. The celebrated Linnæus first urged and excited the culture of wheat in that country, which is now both extensive and successful. The climate, and much of the soil in the Orkneys, seem well adapted for this grain; and these islands are farther south than districts where wheat is raised in Sweden. But where it has been tried in Caithness, in similar circumstances, it has always been sown after potatoes, which were not thoroughly cleaned, and it was sown too late. Yet, where not  
choaked



If ever rye comes to be considered as an object of importance (and certainly it ought to be), no reasonable doubt can be entertained of its being raised with success.

Barley has often been raised, and of no contemptible quality; and had the same precautions been used that are employed elsewhere, there is no reason to think it would have degenerated.

But though all these will grow, and some of them flourish, so as amply to compensate for the labour bestowed on them, black, grey, and red oats, bear or bigg, potatoes, turnip, and what are called the artificial grasses, seem, from the repeated, or rather uniform experience of many individuals, to be best suited to the soil and climate of this country.

About fifty years ago, potatoes were first transferred from the gardens to the fields; and since that time a few of them have been raised on almost every little farm, partly for the consumption of the family, and partly for sale to the people of Kirkwall and Stromness. They have succeeded very well in most situations, and been of much advantage to the poor people; and might have been still more productive, and also of a much superior quality, had due attention been bestowed in procuring the best seed, in changing it from time to time, and in choosing and preparing the ground properly for its reception. This pleasant and wholesome root is now generally planted with the plough, and cleaned either by it or hand-hoeing; and when the seed has been found, and of a prolific nature, it has, on a good soil, produced thirty, forty, or even sometimes fifty fold of excellent potatoes, which, in ordinary years, are sold for threepence the stone at an average. In some places, waste or barren ground has been, by the planting of this root, brought into tillage; and, in the present circumstances of this place, where so little attention is given to the lands, this has proved an excellent improvement.

Turnips, wherever they have been introduced, have been still more productive. They are commonly sown in drills, and repeatedly horse-

choaked with weeds, the crops have been abundantly flattering. Were the land thoroughly cleaned by a naked fallow, and well dosed with calcareous and putrescent manures, there is no doubt but this crop would succeed. After fallow it can be sown earlier than after potatoes; but the land must be completely secured from all intrusions of cattle.—E.



hoed through the summer, with the view of furnishing spring or winter provender for the cattle. And so well calculated does this place appear for the production of this root, that our turnip crops have in several instances succeeded, when they have failed in many other parts of the kingdom. The winter frost is seldom so intense as to hurt them, though they stand on the field on which they grow through the whole of that season; so that the cattle devour them with as much relish in spring as they do in harvest. Seldom or never do they fail, unless when sown on wet ground, or too thick; or when the weeds, instead of being seasonably rooted out, are allowed to remain and choke them. They grow often to the size of twelve or fourteen pounds; and thirty-six tons have sometimes been produced on an acre.

In a country like this, consisting of so many islands, so remarkably well situated for trade, and abounding with a multitude of the best harbours, to which ships occasionally resort from all nations, it is almost impossible to say what advantage might result from raising a very large quantity of so certain, and at the same time so valuable a production. A much larger breed of cattle might be introduced, reared in greater numbers, and, when fed at the proper age on this nutritive root, sold at a high price for naval provisions. So little attention, however, has yet been bestowed on this object, that beef, though till of late cheap, is seldom in plenty; and were a stranger to apply for any considerable quantity, he would be disappointed, if he did not take care to make the purchase by the end of autumn or beginning of winter. Neither the black fly, nor any other destructive insect, ever infest the turnips here; the *aubery* is unknown, and they do not seem liable to other distempers; and yet so little is this beneficial crop cultivated, that not more than six or eight gentlemen have hitherto employed their land in that way; and the whole yearly quantity at present does not exceed thirty or forty acres.

To turnips, which might be raised with such benefit to farmers and to the country at large, sown grass, which succeeds equally well, might be added as an excellent auxiliary. From every trial that has been made (and some of them are of more than twenty years standing), the result has been such as to warrant the conclusion, that few countries are better calculated



for the production of the grasses. Red, white, and yellow clover, tares, rib and rye-grass, with several other sorts, have been cultivated for green food, and also for hay, and have yielded a surprising quantity of excellent fodder. In short, such plentiful and excellent crops of both turnip and sown grass have been produced in different places, and by different persons, that some have imagined that the islands should, instead of being cultivated for grain, as they have been from time immemorial, be converted into pasture, and henceforth applied to the breeding, rearing, and fattening of black cattle. Lands, however, that will produce luxuriant crops of such articles as will serve for provender to these animals, will, it is presumed, under a proper mode of management, yield some sorts of grain at least.

But, without deciding this question, we may be allowed to say, that too little care has been hitherto bestowed on these important articles; and though it is pleasant to observe that we are making some small progress, we are still very far behind most other places. The same may be said with regard to flax, which has also, in a small degree, engaged the attention of some few of our farmers. Many years ago, it is mentioned as making one of the articles produced by our agriculture; and, it seems, from other circumstances, to have been more attended to then, and raised in greater quantity than at present. Till very lately it was confined almost to one parish, which produced more of it than all the rest conjointly. This was chiefly owing to the principal proprietor, who thought his time well spent on his estate, in the cultivation of his farm, and in inspecting the conduct of his tenants. To encourage them to bend their attention to this sort of produce, for which he thought their farms well calculated, he presented them with linseed gratis; taught them the best manner of raising it, and of watering and dressing it; and when the term of payment arrived, he received his rents, not in kind or in money, but in the cloth into which the flax had been manufactured.

The consequence was, that the inhabitants of that parish soon became distinguished among their neighbours for superior wealth and superior industry, and afforded a proof of what inestimable value the residence of a proprietor of considerable fortune and virtue is to the prosperity of a people.

Though



Though the production of flax has been in a great measure confined to that parish, many others seem equally well fitted for it; and several circumstances point out the propriety of attending particularly to the production of this article. For many years past the women have been much employed in the spinning of linen-yarn, in which they have now acquired some dexterity. They are fond of the employment; it is increasing rapidly; and its produce is either sold in the state of yarn, or converted into cloth; and, in either shape, finds a ready and profitable sale in the southern markets. The raw materials of this manufacture, which are at present imported from abroad, at the expence of a large sum of money put into the pockets of foreign merchants, might easily be raised at home; and thus all that capital might be laid out in the extension of that manufacture, or in other branches of industry.

Sensible of this, a man, who has made so much money by trade (and partly in this very article) as enabled him to purchase an estate, turned his attention lately to the raising of flax; and the success he has met with has rewarded his labour, and exceeded his expectation. He has not confined it to his own farm; he has extended it to his tenants, whom he has encouraged to make the experiment. They are vying with one another in copying the example of their industrious landlord; and a flax mill has been erected.

Hemp might also be produced, to the no small emolument of those that would vigorously and skilfully embark in that business, and to the benefit of the country. The soil in many places appears well suited for raising this article, and it would employ usefully any spare hands, not only to prepare it, but to manufacture it into ropes, sails, and nets, which would be very acceptable to many ships that enter our harbours.

Notwithstanding the laudable attempts that some gentlemen of late have made to introduce agricultural improvement, too little attention has yet been paid to the rotation of crops, which in other places has been attended with such advantage; nor has any at all been given to the change of seed, even from one farm or from one island to another.

As rotation has not been entirely neglected, among the few instances in which it has been observed, this is the most common:—Oats after land  
has



has been taken up from grafs; to which has fucceeded turnip or potatoes; and these again have been followed by bear and grafs. And this rotation, imperfect as it is, has been attended with feveral beneficial consequences.

In fhort, if we review what has been faid with regard to the old, and indeed the general mode of agriculture, as praftifed by the ordinary clafs of farmers, and, at the fame time, look back to what has been delivered with regard to the new, as followed by fome of the gentlemen; if we ftate a comparifon between them in refpect of both the quantity and quality of the productions raifed, we fhall be compelled to conclude, that the fame plans of culture, which experience has found to fucceed beft in the fertile provinces in the fouth, will alfo fucceed here; and that, if these were carried into general praftice, they would be a fignal benefit to these Iflands. But if an opinion contrary to this conclufion has fometimes been given, (and there can be no doubt of its having been done frequently), it has proceeded either from thofe who are entirely ignorant of the nature of agriculture, and the effects of which it might be productive, or from fuch as have had fome inveterate prejudice to gratify, or private and felfifh end to ferve in difcouraging this kind of improvement.

But, even though we had no means of detecting the fallacy of that opinion, and had no opportunity of observing the beneficial effects which the new mode of farming adopted by the gentlemen has produced, we fhould naturally conclude, that it would, in this place, produce the fame happy consequences which it has done in fome of the immediate fouthern counties. Murray, which has long been cultivated in this manner, is little more than fixty miles farther to the fouth than we are. Eaft Rofs is twenty miles nearer us, and in point of improvement, not different from the former. And Caithnefs, the foil and climate of which are not fuperior to our own, is only twelve miles diftant, and, with refpect to farming in the moft approved method, has of late been rivalling her more fouthern neighbours. Confidering then, the fituation of these counties in regard to us, the fmall diftance at which they lye, and the few advantages which they of confequence enjoy in point of climate, it cannot be fupposed that the improvements which have fo much enriched these places; would not, in this, produce a fimilar effect.

Admitting,



Admitting, however, that such a plan of cultivation were advantageous, (and that it would be so, no reasonable man, it is presumed, will venture to deny), some weighty obstacles lye in the way, which must be previously removed. To render it universal, substantial and judicious farmers should be invited to take leases, which should be granted them, of a reasonable length, at rents moderately low, and paid only in money; and steelbow, except in provender for cattle, should be henceforth discontinued, and all unlimited services totally abolished. For the same purpose, such lands as are *runrig* must be divided, and the boundaries so distinctly marked out, as in future to cut off all dispute; and, that the careful keeping of sheep, swine, cattle, &c. might not be neglected, the hill-dikes should be razed to the foundation, and the commons, which they now enclose so imperfectly, should be divided among the proprietors of the adjacent lands.

These changes, which we cannot help thinking would be highly beneficial towards the introduction of a better system, would no doubt require both time, and an union among the heritors or landed proprietors, which unfortunately has seldom taken place, even in cases, where their common interest has been deeply concerned.

Moreover, the feu duties should be converted into money, which we apprehend could be attended with no disadvantage to any party; and if the undefined and fallacious weights, which have so long and so justly been the subject of complaint, were also changed for those of the kingdom, it would serve greatly to pave the way for so desirable an event. Some regulations, also, in regard to servants, should accompany these alterations, as contributing much to the same end. There are at present no proper markets for hiring them; nor has a sufficient regard to their character been paid; and their wages, instead of being given them in money, as in other places, consist sometimes of bear, malt, meal, cloth, and even of a piece of land, which they are allowed time to cultivate, to sow and to reap, on their own account. In some places they are permitted to keep geese, swine, sheep, and cattle, on their master's grafs and provender, in lieu of wages; and it is easy to see the inconveniences to which this mode of payment is subject, and the many evils which it is calculated to produce.

Servants,



Servants, in order to be good, ought to be engaged for a definite time, and for a particular purpose; plenty of such substantial food, and such competent wages should be given them in money, as to compensate for the labour they sustain: no temptation of any kind should ever be held out to divert them from their master's interest; and when they are about to leave his service, a certificate of their having faithfully performed their duty to him, should be indispensable to their finding a new master. If some such regulations as these were rendered general, and duly observed, servants would soon become better acquainted with their duty, more honest, more submissive, and more active; and those that employed them would treat them more kindly, as they would find their interest promoted in being better served; and thus more concord would be established between those two orders of society, in which the comfort of individuals and the prosperity of the country equally consist.

Public markets, for the sale of the produce of land, which are unhappily wanting at present, would also operate as an encouragement to this mode of industry, as well as remove many inconveniences which the people now sustain. The illicit trade, which till of late prevailed much in this country, has had no small influence on the people, and is perhaps the real cause that almost all of them have shown some aversion to public markets, notwithstanding the benefits which they might have produced. Every person conceals what he means to sell, as well as what he intends to buy; and almost all the intercourse of business is carried on in a dark, private, and smuggling manner. A few, and only a few, buyers are scattered through the Islands, and the great body of the people may be considered as sellers, or at least, as having as much of the country produce as would support themselves. The principal, and indeed almost the only buyers, are confined to Stromness and Kirkwall, the former of which contains fifteen hundred, and the latter two thousand inhabitants. If regular markets were once established in these two places, into which the people around might bring the different articles which they raised on their little farms, without the risk of selling them at an undervalue, or of disposing of them on trust, so as to lose them altogether, they would soon learn to value them as they ought, and resort to them cheerfully, as beneficial institutions.



The present mode of transacting their business will serve at the same time to illustrate and confirm this proposition. As soon as a country man is seen in the town, who is known to have any thing to dispose of, he is invited into a house, and made to drink freely, when a bargain is concluded with him, in the presence of the family, for what they stand in need of, and the price which he receives is sometimes little more than the half, or two thirds of the value. But if, taught by experience, he refuses to go into the house, they tell him that there is no need of such articles as he has; that they are of an inferior quality; that they have had the offer of much better at a lower price; and that, if he does not choose to sell them on these terms, he may carry them home, as they are certain none will give higher. Combination in every little town is easily and generally practised; he must therefore carry back his produce, at much trouble and expence, or dispose of it, however much beneath the value, at the price which they had offered.

Besides, the poor farmers, when they carry in any thing for sale, are often compelled to dispose of it on trust; and in that case, are sometimes long in receiving payment, and sometimes disappointed of it altogether. If they can bear this loss without murmuring, and continue to sell in this mode, if they dispose of every thing in private, and at a very low price, they are extolled as the very best of characters; whereas, if they regret their misfortune, and refuse to trust in future, and insist on full value and ready money, they are reproached as the most oppressive of mankind. If such treatment sometimes confine the farmers at home, the inhabitants of Kirkwall come out among their acquaintance in search of the articles that they need; and, in concert, industriously spread reports of the low price of these articles, and of the great plenty of them every day offered for sale in the town, and rejected; and, by this combined artifice and falsehood, they impose on the credulity of those who have little intelligence, with a view to obtain from them advantageous bargains.

To nearly the same objection, is another method of disposing of the produce of land liable. This is by barter with the shopkeepers; who, being equally well acquainted with the value of their own goods, and of what is offered in exchange for them, have, in this respect, the advantage of those



those whom they deal with; and who, if they be not restrained by principle, (which in all of them cannot be expected), may avail themselves of their superior knowledge to reap the fruits of their imposition. Thus, are bear, meal, malt, potatoes, fish, beef, mutton, pork, poultry, butter, cheese, and eggs, generally disposed of; and whoever considers the mode in which this is done, will find no difficulty in conceiving what a bar this must be to every sort of agricultural improvement.

But were regular markets once established for the sale of these articles, the evils that attend the present mode would vanish; competition would regulate the price, (which has sometimes been very unwarrantably fixed by the Magistrates), and the farmers would be stimulated to industry; recollecting, that whatever their exertions could raise, would meet with a ready demand, and an adequate price, at stated times, and at a stated place.

Notwithstanding, however, the want of markets, the ignorance and inattention of the servants, (which is as much owing to the neglect of their masters as to any fault of their own), the imperfect state of agriculture with regard to the implements of husbandry, the preparing and cleaning of the land, the choice and the change of the feed, and the shameful neglect of keeping the cattle at every season, so as to prevent them from hurting the ground and the produce; such is the bounty of the soil in this district, that it is sufficient to support the present population.

Some years, indeed, grain has been imported in considerable quantities, owing to the failure of crops in bad seasons; but the import of this article, in an average of years, has never been equal to its exportation. From the year 1780 to the year 1800, both inclusive, as appears from the Custom-house books, which are reckoned an authentic record, the export exceeded the import more than fifty-one thousand bolls; and, if we had looked farther back, so as to have comprehended a more early period, when the people lived less upon bread, and more on fish and other articles, the former would have borne to the latter a still greater proportion. The exportation in these years was not forced; as the price, in proportion to the value of the grain, was fully as low as in other places; and during the two last years, when the people depended almost entirely

1799  
&  
1800.



on bread for subsistence, as there was no fishing, and the exportation exceeded fourteen thousand bolls, the ordinary price of barley meal was one shilling and sixpence *per* stone, and of oat-meal two shillings; while, in Caithness, each of them sold at more than double that price; and three times the sum would not have bought them in the Edinburgh market.

But if the country can support the present number of the people (and we have seen that it can do even more) under the complicated defects of the old system, and the inconveniences to which it is subject; were a better plan adopted, instead of twenty-four, it might perhaps maintain nearly forty thousand inhabitants; and were the sixty thousand acres that are still in a state of nature, and improveable, brought into culture, and added to the twenty-four thousand acres already in tillage, and all of them improved to the degree of which they are susceptible, it might support a population of more than ninety thousand. To raise the population of a country, and augment it nearly fourfold, by means of internal industry, is an object of the greatest moment, and must gratify every well disposed mind, as it both adds to the happiness of that particular people, and promotes the vigour of the nation to which they belong.

The strength and glory of our nation consist in our navy, by means of which we have already, and may still, bid defiance to all the powers on earth; and such a population would furnish for it seven or eight thousand seamen, who, in point of sobriety, order and obedience, and even, perhaps, skill, are inferior to none in the world.

Animated with the prospect of so much advantage, the Government should lend its assistance (especially as the Crown\* has a deep interest in the

\* Such Crown Lands as the Editor had an opportunity of seeing in Orkney, and elsewhere, are what reverted to the Crown on the abolition of episcopacy. They operate as an effectual bar, not only to their own improvement, but to the improvement of other lands, to which they are contiguous, with which they are common, or are intermixed. The arable is generally of very rich soil; but instead of taking the water off the land, they have laboured to raise the land above the water, by piling up high, broad, and serpentine ridges, between which boats may sail in wet weather. Much wet land, of a better soil than that actually cultivated, has never been touched.



the church-lands, which are all capable of improvement); the nobleman who draws the feu duties should join, for the sake of meliorating his private estate; and the proprietors should open their eyes to their own interest; abandon their politics, which have only served to spread rancour, and foster indolence; and all of them should unite in the improvement of this hitherto unknown and much neglected country.

But the evil does not stop here. The arable Crown Lands are either run-rig, or intermixed, in patches, among lands belonging to other proprietors; while the waste is common to all the properties around. Even where the lessee of the Crown Lands is proprietor of the ridges and patches intermixed with them, he has no power to lot the land into separate farms, to raise the rents of the Crown Lands, or of his own, which happen most unfortunately to be intermixed with them; or, in any shape to alter the mode of occupancy, however beneficial the alteration may appear for himself, for the tenants, or for the public.

The consequences are such as may be expected to result from the premises. The Crown Lands are examples of the most barbarous and slovenly husbandry, that any where disgraces our Island; and the remark may be extended to those lands which are cursed with their contiguity, or intermixture.

The true remedy of the evil would be a division of these lands between the Crown, and intermixed, or common proprietors. Or, as the Crown Rents are never raised, to grant a right of property, under reservation of the rent, to those lessees who had lands common, or intermixed; which would empower them to drain, enclose, and lot the land into commodious farms. If his Majesty have not power, by the terms on which these lands reverted to him, to make these alterations from his sovereign authority; an act of parliament is loudly called for; because it is a scandal that the Crown Lands of this country should not only continue to be the disgrace of our husbandry, but the bane of the improvement of all lands with which they are connected.—E.



## SECTION II.

## MANUFACTURES.

MUCH has been said of the manufacture of woollen cloth, for which this place was formerly distinguished ; and the decline which it has suffered of late, has been the cause of much and serious regret. But what has been said with regard to this branch, has been mostly by old people, who have generally a propensity to extol the customs of early times, and to depreciate as much the times that succeed them.

As there is nothing to convince us that there was any wool ever imported for this purpose, the extent of that manufacture could not be great ; and seems to have been confined to stockings, and some coarse cloth, made of their own wool, which was partly worn by the inhabitants, and partly disposed of in the markets in the south. This exportation has now ceased ; and the wool, which is at present, perhaps, as plentiful as formerly, is manufactured into stockings and blankets, and particularly into a kind of coarse cloth, for the use of children, and such people of both sexes as live in the country ; for those that reside in the towns wear almost all of them English cloth. Except in this respect, the woollen manufacture has, for some time past, met with little attention, however important it may have formerly been, and has now given way to that of linen yarn and linen cloth.

1747. Somewhat more than fifty years ago, this manufacture was introduced, and, like every innovation that promises to employ the leisure of an indolent people, met with a reception that was very unfavourable. As it was pretty well suited, however, to the circumstances of the place, and to the condition of the people, it soon triumphed over every opposition ; diffused itself wide in all quarters ; and not only improved the state of those that directed it, but is said to have saved the lives of many, who would have otherwise



otherwise perished for want in some years of extreme dearth and scarcity. For about the space of fifteen or twenty years, while it was under the direction of one or only a very few persons, it continued in a progressive and flourishing state, furnishing every year twenty-five thousand spindles of excellent linen yarn, to employ the industry of the manufactures in the south.

After that time it suffered a temporary decline. This was owing to some men, who, jealous of those by whom the manufacture was introduced, and by whom it had hitherto been conducted, and envying their profits, resolved to have a share of them; and for that end they imported flax, employed people to dress it, and gave it out to spin among the women that had for some time been thus employed. The spinners, by this time tasting the sweets of industry, and opening their eyes to their own advantage, soon perceived the competition among their employers, and availed themselves of it to raise their wages; and, in proportion as they succeeded in this particular, they became less attentive to their duty. The yarn was accordingly worse spun, worse measured, worse counted, than ever it had been formerly; and, of consequence, lost in the market a part of that character which before it had so justly gained.

Still a considerable quantity of it was spun, and readily found purchasers in Newcastle, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and among the travelling merchants, who came over annually from the coast of Moray and Inverness to attend the great Lammas market, and who receive it in barter for their goods in considerable quantity. Though much of it was disposed of in this manner (to which there lies a still stronger objection than that which has been stated against bartering the country produce with their own shopkeepers), a large quantity still remained, which was commonly wrought into a coarse kind of linen cloth, that, about ten years ago, amounted annually to thirty thousand yards, as appears from the books of the stamp-master. 1790.

Since that time, the yarn has both retrieved its character, and increased in quantity; and the spinning of it is at present in a pretty flourishing condition, owing to different causes. The chief of these is the connexion which a merchant here lately formed with a Company of thread manufacturers in Montrose, from whom he introduced the two-handed spinning wheel. 1800.



wheel, instead of that which had formerly been commonly used. In order to reap from it all the benefit which its nature promised, he brought a woman to teach the young women the dexterous use of the instrument for a limited time; and, when they conduct themselves to her satisfaction till that is expired, they receive a reel and wheel *gratis*; and if any of them excel, several other premiums are given. The plan has succeeded beyond what was expected; the girls entered with such alacrity, that upwards of two hundred of them have already been taught, each of whom can earn about sixpence a day. The employment is so suited to their dispositions, that they prefer it to all others; and it is with difficulty that any of them can be prevailed on to engage as servants in the families of either gentlemen or farmers. Complaints have therefore been made, and objections stated to this new business, as detrimental to agriculture, and other branches of industry, in so far as it deprived them of the accustomed number of hands; and the projector, instead of meeting with that credit which his enterprise merited, is branded with reproach as an enemy of his country.

This evil, however, (if it deserves that name), like every other, has its remedy; a reduction of the number of servants, which are at present kept by all ranks, and especially by farmers in the cultivation of their lands, would most probably prove beneficial, especially were the machinery of labour improved, so as to enable fewer hands to do more work. Were this retrenching scheme adopted, both domestic and rural affairs would be conducted, not only with more economy, but with more effect; and there would be a sufficient number of hands, ready to engage in this or any other branch of business, that might in future be introduced.

But whatever opinion be formed of either this evil or its remedy, the manufacture in question has borne down all opposition; inasmuch that, 1799. last year, about fifty thousand yards of linen were stamped; and, besides the yarn that was bartered in the manner above stated, no fewer than fifty thousand spindles were sold, and as much sent to the thread manufactory.

In considering the progressive state of this business, one cannot help regretting that the raw material is brought from a foreign country; since the country in which it is either partially or wholly manufactured, seems fitted



to raise it in sufficient quantity. From Russia and Holland principally (not to mention what comes from different parts of Great Britain), there are imported annually forty tons of flax into this country, which, at an average, may amount to three thousand pounds Sterling prime cost; all of which might be saved for valuable purposes, were the same attention bestowed on the raising of flax over the whole Islands, that has been successfully paid lately in one or two places.

The same gentleman, who lately erected a flax-mill, has also established a tannery and brewery, which we hope will be successful, and meet with suitable encouragement; but, however this may be, neither these nor the linen manufacture can ever arrive at such a degree of perfection, as to rival that of kelp, which may justly be considered as the staple commodity.

Kelp is a substance composed of different materials, of which the fossil or mineral alkali, or, as it is commonly called, soda\*, is the chief. This ingredient renders it useful in the composition of soap; in the manufacture of allum, and in the formation of crown and bottle-glass; and in these manufactures, kelp answers all the purposes of the very best potash, which cannot be procured but at great expence from abroad, while the former can be obtained by the industry of our own people on our own shores. It is formed of the ashes of marine plants, which are cut from the rocks with a hook, or collected on the shore for that purpose, and dried on the beach to a certain extent: they are afterwards burnt in a kiln in considerable quantity, in which they are strongly stirred with an iron rake into a fluid state; and when they cool, the ashes condense into a dark blue or whitish coloured mass, nearly of the hardness and solidity of a fragment of rock. The kilns employed in this operation are rudely constructed of stones, in the form of a circle, four or five feet in diameter, and about one in depth; and in each of them at a time are commonly burnt from two to six hundred

\* In the fresh growing plants, no other salts but muriate of soda, and such as are found dissolved in the sea-water, could be traced. The alkaline salts seem to be produced by the burning of the plants. The soda seems to be derived from the decomposition of part of the muriate of soda, or common salt, originally in the composition of the plant: owing to some unknown ingredient in the plant, which either dissipates, or decomposes, the muriatic acid. But, in kelp, the greatest proportion of alkaline salt is potash; and this seems to be formed by some unknown atmospheric combination with the mucilage of the plant.—E.



weight of kelp, which would perhaps be improved in quality as well as quantity, were they of still larger dimensions.

The three numerous genera of *Fucus*, *Ulva*, and *Conferva*, all contain qualities that render them capable of being converted into this substance; but the two latter, and indeed many of the former, are of such a loose texture, and are met with so seldom, as to contribute but little to its formation; so that the whole quantity of kelp, produced here at least, may be considered as furnished by submarine plants of the four following kinds:

I. The (*fucus nodosus*, Lin.) knotted sea-wrack, or bell-wrack, which is here known by the name of *yellow tang*, and generally occupies that part of the shore that is next the high-water mark.

II. The (*fucus ferratus*, Lin.) jagged or serrated sea-wrack, which is also denominated *yellow tang*, and which is common on that part of the shore that lies immediately below the former, or between it and the lowest ebb.

III. The (*fucus vesiculosus*, Lin.) sea-wrack that is both the most common and of the best quality, and is called the *sea-oak*, on account of the resemblance which its leaves bear to those of the oak tree. Here, from its colour, it is called *black tang*; it is found almost constantly on that part of the shore next the lowest ebb.

IV. The (*fucus digitatus*, Lin.) tangle, which is here universally known by the name of *ware*, or *redware*, is in point of situation below all the rest, inasmuch that though its tops be occasionally uncovered, its roots are very seldom left dry, even at the lowest spring tides.

These plants fix their roots in the immoveable rocks, in the loose stones, and even in such pieces of wood as happen to be thrown in by the weather, from none of which, however, they seem to draw any part of their subsistence, but depend for it probably on the air and water. Nor do they grow in the deep, but only on the shores, where they are either entirely, or in part, uncovered at complete low water. Hence, where the shores are bold and steep, and the water near them very deep, as on the west side of this country, these plants do not grow; and if they did, they would be inaccessible on account of the constant agitation of the billows. Frequently, however, it has been observed, that they thrive much better on shores exposed to  
a current,



a current, than they do in a more quiescent situation ; that they produce, in proportion to their quantity, much more kelp ; and, when the place of their growth is near the mouth of rivulets, or in any way exposed to much fresh water, that both their quantity and quality are inferior to what they are in perfectly salt water. Their growth is not only more rapid, but more vigorous, the nearer they are to the lowest ebb ; and they gradually produce a less luxuriant crop as they approach the flood-mark. The nature of the rocks, too, on which they grow, seems to influence the bulk of the crop, and perhaps its quality, as it has sometimes been observed, that sandstone, or even argillaceous schistus, is seldom covered with such a thick coat of weeds, as either whin or limestone. In a situation suited to their nature, they seem to arrive at the greatest perfection for the purpose intended, in the space of two, or at most three years ; before that age, in many places, they are too short to admit of cutting ; and when allowed to stand for four or five years, the same weight, or the same quantity of weeds, will not produce so much kelp, as if they had been cut and manufactured sooner.

The months of April and May are supposed to be the most productive season, though the people here seldom or never begin so early, as they are in general connected with farms, which occupy their attention till the beginning of June. From that time to the first or middle of August, nearly three thousand people of both sexes, most of them young, are employed in this manufacture ; each of them, during that period, makes a ton, consisting of twenty-four hundred weight of kelp, for which they receive, in some cases, thirty or forty shillings, and in others fifty shillings, or even sometimes three pounds Sterling.

Manufacturing farmers seldom acquire skill in either profession, as their attention is divided between them ; and as they trust to both for subsistence, sometimes the one may fail, and sometimes the other ; their spirits sink with the loss which they sustain, and then both their farms and manufacture are neglected. This observation is but too just with regard to those who, at the same time, burn kelp and cultivate the land ; so that a signal benefit would result from separating these two employments, as they have undoubtedly, for many years past, incumbered and impeded the progress of each other. If such a measure were deemed expedient, a number of people



could, without any detriment, be taken by degrees from agriculture, and employed entirely in the kelp manufacture. This, however, could not be done, unless kilns were introduced, of a proper construction, for burning the weeds as they are cut from the rocks, or driven ashore by the billows, not only in summer, as at present, but during the whole year\*.

At particular places, such as creeks and bays in several of the islands, vast quantities of ware or sea-weeds are often thrown ashore in spring, harvest, or winter; and as no method has yet been tried of converting these into kelp, so long as they are in a fresh state, and as the land cannot exhaust these quantities in manure, excellent materials for several hundred tons of kelp are thus lost every year to the proprietors and the country. Not only all of this might be gained, but a very considerable addition made to it, if the weeds, both ware and tang, driven or cut, were taken fresh, and in that state converted into kelp, by means of kilns properly constructed for the purpose, and wrought through the whole year by people whose sole employment it should be to attend to that business. The kelpers then, as they might in that case be properly called, would acquire dexterity from the division of labour, and be ever ready, not only to treat the weeds in a proper manner, and burn them in the best state, but to cut and manufacture them in many places not hitherto frequented; and they would find leisure to apply themselves to the burning of tangle or redware, which in most places is so abundant, and which can only be obtained at the spring-tides. This last branch of the kelp manufacture has become an object of attention of late only. It is, however, capable of vast improvement.

Besides, if enlarging the soil for the production of sea-weeds be a practicable improvement, (and it is apprehended to be so, as in this

\* Colonel Fullarton's kilns have been lately tried in Orkney, with much success. Also a more simple form of kiln, composed of fire-bricks, similar in construction to those commonly used; only it has reservoirs, or moulds, into which the liquid kelp is allowed to flow, and consolidate, and is not allowed to cool while there are weeds within its reach. It can then be removed and reconstructed contiguous to another range of weeds. Were such kilns constructed on flat bottomed boats, they might be moved from bay to bay, and consume all the *fuci* in succession. Thus the burning of kelp might become a separate trade. But there are other products, perhaps more valuable than the alkaline salt, which might be obtained from sea-weeds; and, were the extraction of these combined with the other process, these plants might become more valuable than any our islands produce.—E.



country it has in several instances been tried with effect), the kelpers might employ their time, between tides, in digging or collecting such hard, large, compact stones, as were best for the purpose, and placing them on the shores in such sandy or clayey bottoms as contain few or no weeds, and in such a manner as would expose them to the least danger of being removed by the surge.

The kelp, after being made in the manner above stated, is suffered to remain some time in the kiln, in order to cool, (if the mass be large, it will require two or three days), when it is raised in large pieces, and immediately placed in some sheltered situation. This precaution is used, from an idea, that, if exposed to the atmosphere, from which it evidently draws moisture, it crumbles down into small pieces, and thus loses much of its value. Storehouses have therefore been built every where for its reception. Not only in this, but in other respects, and indeed in all the steps of the process, such as collecting, drying, and burning the weeds, and raking the ashes into fluidity, much care is taken to preserve it from impurities of every sort.

The best kind of kelp has an acrid or caustic taste, and a sulphurous smell; the colour is a dark blue, bordering on green; the pieces are large and compact in their texture, with few or no pores containing charry matter, as this is a proof that the sea plants have not undergone a thorough combustion, or that the mass has not been sufficiently fused. These are marks of its goodness, which are obvious to the senses, and may in general be depended on, though they are very far from being infallible, as any one must know who has ever made experiments on this substance. To satisfy us completely in regard to this matter, we must know accurately the quantity of soda that the kelp contains, which, in the best kind, has, by repeated experiments, been found to be, the one twentieth part of its weight.

Though the manufactures, into which kelp now enters copiously as a valuable ingredient, have existed long, the preparation of this substance does not appear to have been of a very long standing any where, and certainly has not been known here above eighty years. It was about the commencement of that period, that some gentlemen, who had either seen the ma-  
nufacture



nufacture in other parts, or had heard it described, entered into a resolution to attempt the introduction of it into their own country. The shores, extensive in every direction, and thickly clad with these marine plants, to which the hand of man had hitherto given no disturbance, presented themselves to view in all their luxuriance, and excited hopes, that there might one day result from them such signal benefits, as to extend, not to the people of Orkney alone, but to the whole nation.

Beneficial, however, as the attempt might appear, it was not very much relished; and the lower class of people, who would have rejoiced at the prospect, had they not been sunk in the most torpid indolence, discovered such an aversion to the measure, that they made no scruple to give it the most determined opposition. Regarding every kind of employment which they had not been accustomed to see, or to engage in, as not only useless, but detrimental, they represented boldly to their superiors the bad consequences which they apprehended from this new and strange business. ‘They were certain,’ they said, ‘that the suffocating smoke that issued from the kelp kilns would sicken or kill every species of fish on the coast, or drive them into the ocean far beyond the reach of the fishermen; blast the corn and the grass on their farms; introduce diseases of various kinds; and smite with barrenness their sheep, horses, and cattle, and even their own families.’ Deaf to these, and such like remonstrances, which were the dictates of ignorance, and the most supine indolence of disposition, the gentlemen persisted in their resolution, and carried their point. The manufacture was introduced; overleaped every obstacle that had so foolishly been thrown in its way, and has since flourished in a wonderful manner.

As the price, however, for the first twenty years after its introduction, was but low, the quantity made in that time was inconsiderable. During the subsequent twenty years, the price rose to two pounds five shillings the ton; and the value of all that was made amounted to two thousand pounds Sterling annually. For the following ten years, the price advanced to four guineas at an average, and the yearly value was six thousand pounds Sterling. The price at the market, from seventeen hundred and seventy, for the space of eight years, was not less than five pounds



pounds the ton, nor the value of the annual quantity below ten thousand pounds; and from that time to seventeen hundred and ninety-one inclusive, which is a period of thirteen years, the price was still higher, being six pounds per ton; and the whole yearly value amounted to seventeen thousand pounds Sterling. From that time to the present, including a space of ten years, the quantity of kelp has increased considerably; and the price has risen in a still greater proportion, especially since the commencement of the present war, which has, for obvious reasons, raised to an enormous height the price of Spanish barilla. 1800.

In some few years during that period, the quantity made has been three thousand tons; and as the price has been nine pounds, nine guineas, and even ten pounds, the manufacture has brought into the place nearly thirty thousand pounds Sterling, sometimes, in one season. The average in that time, indeed, has not been so great, nor has the price always been so high; so that we cannot rate the former above two thousand five hundred tons, nor the latter at more than nine pounds Sterling per ton. Even at this medium, however, the sum arising from the quantity in that period amounts to two hundred and twenty-five thousand pounds; and if this be added to the whole sum that had been gained in the seventy years preceding, the total, since the commencement of the manufacture, will rise to five hundred and ninety-five thousand pounds Sterling. Thus, in the space of eighty years, the proprietors of these Islands, whose land-rent does not exceed eight thousand pounds a year, have, together with their tenants and their servants, received, in addition to their incomes, the enormous sum of more than half a million Sterling. This vast sum, indeed, has been divided not only in the name of profits, rent, and wages, but of freights, commission, insurance, &c.; and a considerable part of it has been drawn and spent by gentlemen who were non-resident; but as the kelp was not only manufactured by natives, but sold by them, and for the most part carried to market in vessels the property of men in the place, the advantages of which it has been productive have been reaped almost entirely by this country.

Such a large sum, even with the deductions already noticed, introduced into a place where money was scarce; where no other manufacture, except that



that of a little linen and linen-yarn was known; where fisheries, that might have constituted wealth, were regarded as an object of inferior moment; and where commerce languished, partly for want of spirit, and partly for want of capital, must have produced some remarkable effects. To ascertain the nature, as well as the extent of these, an accurate view must be taken of the present state of the country, and a comparison drawn between it, and that which existed previously to the introduction of this manufacture, or even before the sums annually received for its produce amounted to any considerable height.

1800. More than three thousand people are at present employed in this beneficial manufacture, each of whom will, during the two last months of summer, earn, in addition to their ordinary income, two pounds, two pounds ten shillings, or even three pounds Sterling, which is more than they would have gained in a whole year formerly. But, besides the benefits it confers on those who are immediately engaged in the employment, it has often been of great advantage to the inhabitants in general. From the situation and circumstances of this place, it is evident, that it must be subject to sudden and violent gusts of wind, which frequently blast the productions of the earth to such a degree, that the crops, from having the most flattering appearance in the summer, or early in the autumn, sometimes in the end prove of little value. For several years successively, at no very remote period, this was unfortunately the case, when these Islands were visited with scarcity; and, had it not been for this excellent manufacture, which enabled the people to buy meal from the merchants, and the proprietors to import it for their tenants and dependants, many of the former would have been reduced to great difficulties, or even perhaps perished for want; and some of the latter would have been stripped of their estates, or reduced to bankruptcy. Important as these effects may appear, there are others, little, if at all inferior, that remain to be mentioned.

Perhaps in no country was ever industry in a lower state than it seems to have been in this, before, and even for some time after, the introduction of this manufacture; but, by its means, industry is now happily in some measure increased, though not in the degree it might have been, had only a part of the large capital, of which it has been productive, been laid



laid out in the improvement of waste lands, or in extending the labour of the people in other respects. But though no part of this capital has hitherto been laid out in this manner, it is hoped that it will be so applied in some future period, when it will prove a tenfold blessing, and serve greatly to ameliorate the people's condition.

Formerly, they were poor, indolent, dejected creatures, in want often of the necessaries, and most always of the conveniencies or the comforts of life. At present, the case is otherwise; for they are now much better fed, cleaner in their persons, and far better clothed; their houses are neater, warmer, and more commodious: and in proportion as they find themselves more comfortable, they are rising to know their own worth, to shake off that servility that never fails to debase the character, and to discover more independence of spirit. Neither is this spirit confined to those who are immediately connected with this business: for it is pleasant to observe, that it has diffused itself, in some degree, among the whole body of the people, who know their rights much better than they were accustomed to do, and consider themselves as of more importance. Some new branch of industry, therefore, ought to be introduced immediately among them, before that spirit evaporates, or, what is far more dangerous, before it degenerates into that unbridled licentiousness, which is but too much the characteristic of the present age.

But while we trace with pleasure the manifold advantages that result from this branch of business, and anticipate several others, which future times may give rise to, candour compels us at the same time to state some of the disadvantages, which it would appear to have produced.

As the value of money is always in proportion to its plenty or scarcity, the influx which this branch occasioned, so far diminished its value, that not only the conveniences and luxuries of life, but also the necessaries, have risen to an extraordinary price, which bears very hard on such as have their incomes in money only; and agriculture, which should every where be considered as the first, as well as the most useful of the arts, instead of being improved from the acquisition of capital, has been neglected as a less lucrative branch. Besides, the money that has flowed



in so plentifully from that source, has introduced among all ranks a style of living, in point of houses, furniture, dress and table, which their estates, farms and incomes, independently of this manufacture, will by no means support; and consequently, if ever this manufacture fail, (and we can have no absolute dependence on its permanency), unavoidable ruin will be brought on the proprietors, their tenants and their families.

To such as are unacquainted with the temper and circumstances of the people, it may seem a little surprising that none of the manufactures, in which kelp is used, has ever yet been attempted to be introduced. Soap could certainly be manufactured here with advantage, as we have in abundance not only this ingredient, but also oil, butter, and tallow, which are purchased for that very purpose in other places; and provisions and labour are still cheaper with us, than where this manufacture is carried on with effect. Glass might also perhaps be made, and even alum, since we have one material in perfection, and, though we want coal, that defect could easily be supplied by the importation of a sufficient quantity, at a moderate expence, in the ships that carry the kelp to the Newcastle market. Besides, were materials wanting for these, or any other manufacture suited to our circumstances, no place can be more conveniently situated than this is, from bringing them from another country.

Objections have been stated to manufactures in general, on account of the influence which they naturally have in raising the price of grain and other articles; and, consequently, that of the deficient or unpaid feu-duties. But it may be remarked, that kelp has had more effect in this way, than all the manufactures that could have been introduced, taken together. In order to obtain a low fiar, or, in other words, to pay a small price for the undelivered feu-duties, it has long been the policy of this place to keep provisions cheap; and, though all seem to concur in this, their plans for this purpose have either been so ill contrived, or their execution so injudiciously directed, that every attempt that has been made, has had a directly contrary effect. This is just what might have been expected, and what in general happens, when any interference takes place in such things as ought to be left at liberty.



The provisions here must in their price bear a proportion to what they are in other places, on account of the extensive and regular intercourse; and nothing can prevent that proportion, but a check given to the intercourse which, though sometimes spoken of and even threatened, would be equally repugnant to every principle of justice, and to every rule of sound policy.

The best, or perhaps the only way of keeping provisions cheap, is to adopt such measures as would raise them in greater quantity; for this purpose, here, it would be necessary to drain lochs, to cultivate waste lands, to improve such as are already cultivated, and to encourage fishing. To the adoption of these measures the feu-duties can form no insuperable bar, since they cannot be considered in the light of a tithe or a thirlage, but only as a definite portion of grain, payable yearly by weight, and not by measure, partaking of the nature of a perpetual *tack-duty* or rent.

A conversion of them, however, on reasonable terms, while it could not hurt the interest of the nobleman to whom they belong, might serve greatly to advance the interest of the country, provided the proprietors would also convert the rents of their tenants into money, on the same terms; grant them leases of a convenient length; abolish unlimited services; and take such other steps as may promote the general improvement.



## SECTION III.

## COMMERCE.

To any person who will take the trouble to cast his eyes on a map of the empire, nothing can be more obvious than the advantages which these Islands possess for engaging in some branches of commercial industry. Situated near the extremity of the empire to the north, they have equally easy access to the manufacturing and trading towns on the east and west coasts of Great Britain, Ireland, the Baltic, and Holland, are at no great distance; and ships might sail with as much safety and expedition, from our excellent harbours, to America or the West Indies, as from almost any port in the kingdom. Such a situation naturally suggests a commercial connexion with these places; than which, nothing could be more favourable, were the circumstances of the place, in other respects, such as to enable the inhabitants to form or support such a connexion. But in vain might they attempt to establish a Baltic, Dutch, Irish, or an American trade, in the present imperfect state of their agriculture and manufactures; which, in every country where there is soil or surface to produce subsistence for man, ought to be improved to such a degree as to serve for the foundation of the commercial arts.

At present, they are in want of capital, people, and industry, sufficient to render it expedient for them to embark in foreign trade; and, till they obtain these advantages, they must content themselves with trafficking in those few articles that are raised in their own country, or are necessary for its consumption.

The little trade which they have, though by no means flourishing, is rather in an improving state, as will appear from an account of the commodities exported and imported. The principal exports are beef, pork, butter,



butter, tallow, hides, calf-skins, rabbit-skins, salt-fish, oil, feathers, linen-yarn, and coarse linen cloth, kelp, and, in years of fertility, corn, meal, and malt, in no small quantity.

The imports are, wood, iron, flax, coal, sugar, spirits, wines, snuff and tobacco, flour and biscuit, soap, leather, hardware, broad-cloth and printed linens and cottons.

In the annexed state of the articles imported, their value is stated at the prime cost, in the markets of London, Manchester, Whitby, Newcastle, Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Aberdeen, the places from which they are generally brought. That of the exports, on the other hand, is rated at the price which they ordinarily bring at the same markets, and at Bristol, Liverpool, Leith, and Dumbarton; markets, to which kelp has of late been carried in considerable quantities. The information has been drawn from the Custom-house books, which seem very accurate; and, in order to ascertain their value, recourse was had to those of the most judicious and intelligent shopkeepers.

Four different periods have been fixed on, ten years distant from each other, in order to give a more distinct idea of the progressive state of the little trade of these remote Islands.



*An ACCURATE STATEMENT of the VALUE of the GOODS carried from and to ORKNEY; together with an ACCOUNT of the TONNAGE, the NUMBER of SHIPS, and of the SAILORS on board of them, that belonged to it, in the Years following, viz.*

An. Dom.

|       |   |         |           |    |   |           |
|-------|---|---------|-----------|----|---|-----------|
| 1770. | { | Exports | L. 12,018 | 4  | 0 | Sterling. |
|       |   | Imports | 10,406    | 6  | 0 |           |
|       |   |         | L. 1,611  | 18 | 0 |           |
| 1780. | { | Exports | L. 23,247 | 10 | 0 |           |
|       |   | Imports | 14,011    | 6  | 0 |           |
|       |   |         | L. 9,236  | 4  | 0 |           |
| 1790. | { | Exports | L. 26,598 | 12 | 0 |           |
|       |   | Imports | 20,803    | 0  | 0 |           |
|       |   |         | L. 5,795  | 12 | 0 |           |
| 1800. | { | Exports | L. 39,677 | 9  | 4 |           |
|       |   | Imports | 35,789    | 17 | 4 |           |
|       |   |         | L. 3,887  | 12 | 0 |           |

|       |           |            |            |               |
|-------|-----------|------------|------------|---------------|
| 1770. | Shipping, | 825 tons.  | Ships, 17. | Sailors, 76.  |
| 1780. | Shipping, | 940 tons.  | Ships, 20. | Sailors, 90.  |
| 1790. | Shipping, | 2000 tons. | Ships, 33. | Sailors, 170. |
| 1800. | Shipping, | 1375 tons. | Ships, 21. | Sailors, 119. |

Thus, the trade has been gradually increasing, for at least the space of thirty years. And, that the tonnage and number of the shipping, as well as the number of the failors, have not increased in proportion, has been owing to captures by the enemy and to shipwrecks.



## SECTION IV.

## FISHERIES.

NOTHING contributes more to the prosperity of any country, than to have its nature, situation, and circumstances accurately investigated and thoroughly known; and to have that kind of industry not only introduced, but supported and encouraged, which is best adapted to it in these respects. To this wise policy, in a great measure, was it owing that the Dutch, with a territory that is neither extensive nor of the best quality, raised themselves to a degree of consequence that rendered them, formerly, the object of wonder and envy to the nations around them. If an island, within their limits, contained many creeks and bays, it was destined for the building of boats, floops, and other small craft. Another, that had not these advantages, but a soil fitted for the purpose, was appropriated to the production of flax and hemp, to be made into twine, nets, cordage, and sailcloth for the different vessels. A third, that was distinguished for the luxuriance of its grass or the excellence of its pasture, was set apart to furnish milk, butter, and beef for the inhabitants. While a fourth, on account of its superior richness of soil, produced oats, barley, peas, beans, and wheat.

Unfortunately, no such method has ever yet been adopted in regard to the Islands in question; for they are deprived not only of the advantages that result from a selection of places, and the establishment of staples suited to their circumstances, but even of those which might arise from that kind of industry which seems best calculated for them, considered as a whole. In proof of this, it may be observed, that though their situation is favourable to almost every kind of fishery, and the multitude and variety of excellent fish on the coasts promise to reward amply the labour of the people who might be thus engaged, very little attention has hitherto been bestowed



bestowed on this object; and, in the few instances where it has, strangers have performed the work, and reaped the benefit.

Since the people to the north, south, and west of this country, who are in some respects in a similar condition, have embarked keenly in this species of industry, it may seem strange that here it should have met with such general neglect. The most probable reason that can be given is, that they who live in the country have almost all of them little farms to occupy their attention, and are, for the most part, employed in the season that is best calculated for fishing, in the manufacture of kelp, which, if not always a more lucrative, is at least a more certain and a less hazardous employment. But were once the surplus number of hands taken from agriculture, which, as has been stated, that business could easily spare, and were kelp manufactured by people whose sole business it was at all seasons, men might be found to engage in fishing as their only profession, without which it is in vain to expect that excellence in this line can ever be gained.

In the intervals of their labour on the land and on the rocks, the people at present launch their boats, and catch, near the shore, a few fish for their immediate support, without discovering the smallest inclination to advance farther into the sea, where they would seldom fail to find fish of a superior kind and quality.

An exception in regard to lobsters deserves to be mentioned. For some years past, the lobster fishing has been carried on to a considerable extent. It seems to be increasing, and has already been a profitable concern to the Company, and of much benefit to many of the people in several of the Islands. These fish, which are excellent and numerous, are caught in nets, and confined in chests till such time as the ships arrive that are to carry them away. An opulent English Company has undertaken and conducts this business, who employ a number of smacks that have large wells in their holds, for the purpose of containing the fish, and carrying them alive weekly to the London market. About a hundred boats are employed, with ten men in each; and though the lobsters are sold for two pence Sterling a piece, a good fisherman will gain, even at this low rate,



ten pounds in the summer. The whole sum that this branch of business is calculated to produce to the inhabitants at present, amounts annually to a thousand pounds Sterling. And, as there are many places where this species of fish abound, that have not yet been visited by the fishermen, it is believed, on good grounds, that twice that sum might easily be drawn from that fishery.

A far greater sum than this, it is imagined, might be acquired, if due attention were paid to the herring fishery. That fish, it is well known, comes every year in immense shoals from the north, one of which seems to divide itself into two branches; and, in its progress southwards, the one branch hovers for some time about the Northern Isles and the East coast, while the other branch visits those islands that are situated on the West coast of Great Britain. In the month of June, herrings are caught in vast numbers, and in the very best condition, on the coast of Shetland. About the end of July, or beginning of August, they commonly reach the coasts of Caithness and Sutherland, and much about the same time make their first appearance in the lochs and bays of the Western Isles. In thus passing on both sides of us when the weather is favourable, they are often seen in great multitudes in the sounds, creeks, and bays, and might then be caught in myriads with the utmost facility. Such, however, is either the want of hands, or the want of capital, skill, or enterprise, for engaging in this species of industry, that though it promises not only profits to those who would undertake it, but much advantage to the people at large, no attempt has hitherto been made to establish, or even begin so beneficial a business.

The same neglect has been shown to the cod and ling fishery, which, if undertaken with spirit, and pursued with perseverance and judgment, could not, it is believed, fail to add much to the industry and riches of this country. Along almost all the coasts, and at no great distance from land, there are banks to which this fish resort, and where they are caught in plenty, as often as the sea and weather permit the boats (which are not very well calculated for the purpose) to reach those places in safety. As a proof of their abundance, it may be observed, that in the island of Waes, the little farmers on the shores of the Pentland Frith have some-



times directed their attention, in their leisure hours, to fishing; and, with a few boats only, and in the time which they could spare from their other labour, they have been known to catch forty thousand excellent cod fish in one season. Had the attention of these people been directed solely to that object, and had their boats been properly constructed for the purpose they might certainly have caught with ease ten times that number. The success that follows their exertions in these unfavourable circumstances, points out that place as an eligible fishing station; to which might be added, with a prospect of similar success, Stromness, Birsay or Evie, Westray and Sanday, which might be the places for catching and curing cod and ling; while Stronsay, Deerness, and South Ronaldshay might be proper stations for both the lobster and herring fisheries.

But whatever advantage might result from this business either to individuals or society, it is in vain to think of its commencement, till either the inhabitants acquire more enterprise and more skill; or proper fishermen be brought from another place to animate and instruct them; till boats better adapted to the employment be procured; and till decked sloops be furnished, that may effectually cover these boats from the violence of the sea, or the inclemency of the weather.

The number of hands which this branch of industry employs in the sister Islands to the north, the multitude of people it supports, no less than the large sums that are drawn from it to augment the revenue of the proprietors, should certainly induce men of capital to engage in that promising business. The same men might also perhaps promote their own interest, as well as that of the public, by laying out a part of their capital, for the purpose of sharing the profits of the seal and whale fishery. Several towns on the east coast of Britain have for many years been concerned in that business; and their profits have no doubt been such as to encourage them to continue their exertions. Still greater profits, it is believed, might be obtained by those who would embark in it here, as this place possesses several signal advantages. In point of distance, for example, it is much nearer the fishing ground; seamen's wages as well as all sorts of provisions, are cheaper; and plenty of men fit for the employment could be found, as many of them have been long accustomed to serve on board of ships from  
other



other places engaged in that business. The low price, too, of some sorts of labour here, would, when once they had begun the trade, suggest the propriety of landing the spick or blubber, in order to undergo the process for converting it into oil in this place, which would be another source of employment and emolument to these islands. Markets in abundance for this commodity could be every where found; and it could be carried out at little expence in the ships that carry off the produce of the islands.

But, what would add much to promote, not only this, but every kind of fishing, both here and in some places in the vicinity, would be the establishment of an extensive magazine, containing all things necessary for the purpose. The central situation of these Islands points them out as a fit station for such a magazine; and from it both the the Western Isles and Shetland might be supplied with all sorts of stores, whenever their fishing had been so unexpectedly great, as to drain them of the necessary articles before the conclusion of the fishing season. To furnish this magazine as it ought, would also encourage and support other kinds of industry. Staves might be imported, and made into casks by coopers belonging to the place. hemp might be raised on our soil, and made into twine, lines, nets, sails, and cordage: meal, malt, ale, and spirits might be furnished from our own grain, for which in some years it is difficult to find a proper market. If salt made here would answer the purpose, it could be furnished also, as salt works have been established formerly; and if occasionally the requisite articles could not be furnished here, they could be brought easily from another country.

In short, were these different modes of amelioration adopted; did all ranks, that are any way connected with this country, concur in the improvement of its agriculture, so as not only to produce subsistence for a growing population, but materials for an increased manufacture, in the extension of the kelp in particular; did they avail themselves of the advantages of its situation for entering into several kinds of fisheries, and carrying on some branches of foreign as well as domestic trade; and did they at the same time collect into a magazine materials of various kinds, to enable them to carry on these branches of industry with more effect, this place, which is inconsiderable neither in extent nor fertility, would rise



from obscurity into consequence, and assume that rank which it is entitled to hold among the provinces of the kingdom.

Several thousand excellent sailors would, in that case, be always ready on any emergency to be furnished to the navy of Great Britain, and it would have a claim to expect a suitable protection in return. For this purpose, in times of hostility, a small squadron of ships of war might be conveniently stationed here; which would serve the end, not only of guarding the country, but also of protecting our own trade in the North Seas, and cramping that of our enemies; and, were privateers to join them, there is scarcely any situation where they would be more successful, as a great number of vessels are continually passing.

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To conclude with a summary view of the whole—These Islands, of which twenty-nine are inhabited, and thirty-eight have no inhabitants, were early discovered, and seem evidently to have been first peopled by the Picts, who, from their language, manners, and customs, appear to have been a tribe of the ancient Goths.

That branch of them which settled here, were, like the rest, a free people, though governed by supreme magistrates, under the name of Kings, who were, it is probable, one while independent, and at another tributary to the Pictish monarchs in the north of Scotland, for a period of several hundred years. Towards the end of the ninth, or the beginning of the tenth century, they were invaded, and yielded to the superior force of a warlike people, from the lakes and shores of Norway, by whom they were either extirpated or subdued, as we hear no more of them in the military transactions of that period, though these transactions are recorded at considerable length by the historians of the subsequent age. From that time, the Islands were under the dominion of the sovereigns of that country, who, by means of noblemen of very high rank, governed them as subjects, but not as slaves; infomuch that, during the continuance of their sovereignty, which lasted till after the middle of the fifteenth century, the people seem to have enjoyed a degree of liberty, which, in many parts of Europe, was



at that time unknown. Still they laboured under the inconveniencies, inherent in the condition of a remote province, far from the seat of power, and beyond the reach of riches and commerce. With few incentives to industry, they languished in indolence and obscurity, unless when they rushed into the field, to signalize their courage against their foes, who never attacked their persons or invaded their territory with impunity. But though this temporary exertion might secure them from dangerous enemies, by keeping alive their martial spirit, it could have little or no influence in creating or cherishing an useful and permanent activity. After they became subject, and were annexed to the crown of Scotland, it might have been supposed that they would have improved in this respect. This, however, was not the case; for as they were sometimes farmed on short leases, or managed by *factors* or stewards for the Crown (who were frequently changed), and at other times given to needy court favourites for a short period, these men were all of them so destitute of any fixed or lasting interest in their welfare, as to prevent their engaging in any plans for their improvement.

If those who held the first rank discovered no inclination to improve the place, of which they had the management, neither the lesser proprietors of land, nor the little traders, who were all of them burdened with a heavy load of taxes, could be supposed to have the disposition, or the ability, to undertake such an arduous task. Hence, notwithstanding the excellence of the soil of this country, and the very favourable situation for several kinds of industry in which it is placed, the lands are many of them yet lying in a state of nature, and almost all of them are but very imperfectly cultivated. Manufactures, with only one exception, have scarcely, at this moment, been entered upon; the fisheries are almost entirely neglected; and any little commerce that has hitherto been an object of attention, can hardly be considered as deserving the name.

But, would his Majesty, who is in possession of the church-lands, and who has an interest in their improvement, take the lead in their amelioration; were the Royal example followed by the noble person, who has a right to the feu-duties of the earldom, and has joined to that privilege an extensive private estate; and were the gentlemen and merchants to co-operate



rate in such a business, we should very soon behold with pleasure a new and more interesting order of things take place.

By such means as these, the lakes and marshes would in a short time be drained; the common lands and runrig lands would be divided; and all of them would be so improved, as to produce subsistence for the people, and materials for manufactures of different kinds. Manufactures and commerce and fisheries would spring up and rival one another; the inhabitants would become four times as numerous, more industrious, and consequently more happy; and the Orkney Islands, instead of being a neglected and comparatively useless province, would soon be made a valuable part of the British Empire.



## APPENDIX.

## APPENDIX.







## APPENDIX, No. I.

DIPLOMA, or DEDUCTION, *concerning the GENEALOGIES of the ANCIENT COUNTS OF ORKNEY, from their First Creation to the Fifteenth Century: Drawn up from the most authentic Records, by THOMAS, BISHOP OF ORKNEY, with the Assistance of his CLERGY, and others, in consequence of an Order from ERIC KING OF DENMARK, to investigate the Right of WILLIAM SINCLAIR to the Earldom.*

QUONIAM inter ceteras hujus fluctuantis seculi curas et sollicitudines, pensatâ temporum, morum, ac hominum in hac lacrimarum valle, labilitate et brevitate, testante venerabili illo cronographo Martino, Domini nostri Pape penitentiario, et capellano, necesse videtur de congerie extrahere progenitorum, regum, principum et aliorum preclarorum genealogias per quas mundus iste transitorius regitur, Reges regnant, et principes gubernant signantque; in deductionem, et agnitionem veritatis, quo ad eorundem successionem verisimiliter evenire speratur. Illustri ergo et excellentissimo Domino nostro, principi supremo, Norwegio regi, suisque successoribus, satrapis, patriciis, consulibus et proceribus dicti regni, Thomas Dei et Apostolice Sedis gracia Episcopus Orcadie, et Zetlandie, canonici ecclesie cathedralis Sancti Magni Martyris gloriosissimi, legifer, ceterique proceres, nobiles, populus ac communitas ejusdem, gracia, pax, caritas, gaudium, longanimitas, misericordia a Deo Patre omnipotente et a Jesu Christo in spiritu sancto. In omnibus vobis per quem reges regnant et in



cujus manu corda sunt regum cum omni subjectione, humilitate, et obediencia prompti et parati vestram in Jesu Christi visceribus zelantes et facientes salutem in caritate non ficta. Requirentes ut in dicendis in nostra simplicitate vestra suppleat regia sublimitas et quia scimus firmiter et longi temporis spacio, efficax rerum magistra, nos experientia docuit, quod in dubium non revocamus qualiter erga Comites Orcadie regalis ipsa sublimitas, zelum semper exuberantem exercuit, quamobrem firmam spem gerimus, plenamque fiduciam obtinemus quod illa regia majestas verba nostra benigne recipiat, diligenter intelligat et effective prosequatur, ut infra pectoris claustrum solícite considerare convenit ipsa regia sinceritas et diligenter attendere, quod adulatorium vestre serenitatis aliquid non scribimus, quod secundum Petrum Blessensem in suo prologo canentem, Olei venditores esse non intendimus, sed patefactiores veritatis.

Ergo arbitramur pium esse et meritorium, testimonium perhibere veritati ne veritas occultetur, presertim illa per quam innocenti possit perjudiciam generari, et cum uterque reus est qui veritatem occultat et mendacium dicit, quia ille prodesse non iste nocere desiderat quod a nobis Deus avertat, potissime cum in dicendis per quondam recolende memoriam Erici vestri predecessoris regis nostri admoniti patentes literas fuissetus testimonium perhibere veritati, prout lacius in sequentibus patebit. Hinc est quod nos Thomas Episcopus, capitulum, canonici, legifer, ceterique proceres, nobiles, populus, communitas sive plebei antedicti, coram Deo in fide, ac fidelitate quibus vestre regie majestati tenemur astricti fideliter attestamur et ad perpetuam rei memoriam deducimus fidemque facimus vobis et omnibus presentibus et futuris.

Jesu Christi fidelibus sancte matris ecclesie filiis in forma et effectum subsequentibus. Coram nobis congregatis comparens, magnificus, et præpotens Dominus, Dominus Willielmus de Sancto Claro Comes Orcadie, Dominus de Sinclair in ecclesia Sancti Magni Martyris in Orcadia proposuit in hunc modum; supposuit enim quod nobis bene et ad plenum cognita res fuisset, quomodo magnis retroactis temporibus antecessores sui et progenitores ac ipsi Orcadie comites juste ac juridice, inconcussè, linealiter et gradatim jure hereditario comitatui Orcadie superdicto succederant ac illam per tempora magna et longeva nulla aliena generatione interveniente,



terveniente, quietissime possederant. Et qualiter diverse carte, evidentie, instrumenta, libri censuales et alia diversa probacionum genera fuerant igne consumpta, deperdita, et alienata, hostilitatis tempore et guerrarum, emulorum inimicorumque nonnullorum, defectu et carencia firmissime domus seu municionis inexpugnabilis ubi hujusmodi collocarentur; subjunxit idem Dominus Comes quod habuit literas quondam supremi Domini nostri Regis Erici illustris, patentes quas nobis ostendit et perlegi fecit, precepta continentes subsequencia, scilicet quod si quis nostrum habuerit, vel qui habuerint aliquas cartas, evidencias, cirographa, instrumenta, monumenta, codicillas, acta vel privilegiorum literas, ad progenitores, antecessores vel ad se spectantes, dictumque suum comitatum concernentes, quod indilate et sine mora aut contradictione seu obstaculo quibuscunque, eidem Dominus Comiti deliberaret vel deliberarent, secundum quod ipsius Domini nostri regis evitare velimus indignacionem. Virtute quarum literarum sicut eadem comitis continebit propositio nos requisivit ut si de hujusmodi antedictis monumentis, aliqua habuissimus in nostris scriniis apothecariis, thecis, cistis, archivis, seu cartophilaciis, quod ipsam sibi deliberaremus, et in casu quo non habuerimus, sed sciremus ab aliis ea haberi quod sibi intimaremus et revalaremus.

Et si nec unum nec reliquum sciremus, tunc nos requisivit earundem literarum autoritate, quatenus nos Deum, justiciam et equitatem pre oculis habentes in declaracionem veritatis velimus sagaciter et studiose mature digestis iterim iterim ac tertio perscrutari scripturas, cronicas, autenticas et approbatas que faciunt fidem illas perlegere, diligentur inspicere, sane concipere, et intelligere, ac naturas infeodacionis et ecclesiarum fundaciones perspicue intendere, quibus sic mature rimatis et ad plenum discussis velimus supremo Domino nostro manifestare per genealogias ac cronicas autenticas, per quos et a quibus linealiter et gradatim idem Willielmus Comes processit et per quanta tempora, legitime, juste, bene et inconcusse predecessores sui et ipse gavisi sunt dicto comitatu cum universis et singulis suis insulis, commoditatibus et justis suis pertinenciis, ne hujusmodi successio ultra debitam procelaretur hominum memoriam. His omnibus sic propositis, avisatis, discussis, digestis mature, et ad plenum conscriptis et intellectis, habitis prius diversis et singulis hinc inde tractatibus, ad hono-



rem Dei omnipotentis, manifestationem veritatis et obedienciam et reverenciam supremi Domini nostri regis, tanquam filii obediencie preceptarii mandatarii prout decet in his quæ audivimus a senioribus nostris, deinde que legibus intelleximus et concepimus et ad plenum sano effectu degeffimus per libros, scripturas, cronicas regnorum utrorumque Scocie et Norwegie et progenitorum eorundem; sic quod singulariter singuli et universaliter universi, uno animo, una fide, unico consensu, et assensu, respondemus fidem ut prefertur et testimonium veritatis facientis universis superscriptis.

Quod universa genera munimentorum, cartarum, evidenciarum et aliarum probacionum species que apud nos erant ob reverentiam supremi domini nostri dicto Domino Comiti deliberavimus et exhibuimus ante dictum comitatum concernentia. Sed verum est et in veritate attestamur ex relatione fide dignorum antecessorum et progenitorum nostrorum quod principalus et precipuus mansus sive manerium Dominorum Comitum Orcadie fuit diversis temporibus igne combustis et ad nihilum redactus et funditus destructus et patria tota depredata, et vastata per emulos nostros et inimicos per quas depredaciones, consumpciones, et destrucciones firmiter creditas quod principales evidencie, carte et alie patentes, diverse litere, fuerunt et sunt alienate et consumpte spectantes et concernantes ad antecessores et progenitores dicti domini Comitis defectu unius castri in quo tuitissime ipse evidencie et carte et alia patrie jocalia firmissime poterant collocari.

Ast quantam ad linealem progressum et gradum successionis dicti Domini Comitis et suorum antecessorum, seu progenitorum Comitum Orcadie, nos prenominati superius expressatis juxta nostrum ingenium, sensum et intellectum perscrutari sumus et mature avisati lucidissime per diversa linguarum genera, scripturas autenticas et approbatas cronicas, scilicet in lingua Latina et Norwegica per quas reperimus infeodaciones ecclesiarum nostrarum, genealogias nostras et antecessorum nostrorum, cartis et evidenciis ipsorum et nostrorum manifestantibus et claro filio eloquio testimoniam perhibentibus ac fidem facientibus; in quibusdam cronicis, libris, cartis ac aliis autenticis scripturis reperimus nomina diversorum comitum Orcadie tempora infeodacionum ipsorum juxta modum

et



et formam sequentem, sed de eorum strenuis et notabilibus operacionibus, gestis, nominibus filiorum filiarumque suarum; de modo migrandi ab hac luce, de divisione seu unione hereditatis ipsorum, de incremento, vel decremento possessionum suarum pro presenti brevitatis causa pretermittimus; et nos ad antiquas chronicas et genealogias autenticas et approbatas referimus.

Reperimus itaque, imprimis, quod tempore Haraldi Comati primi regis Norwegie, qui gavissus est per totum regnum suum hac terra sive insularum patria Orcadie fuit inhabitata et culta duabus nacionibus scilicet Peti et Pape que due genera naciones fuerant destructe radicitus, ac penitus per Norwegienses de stirpe sive de tribu strenuissimi principis Rognaldi qui sic sunt ipsas naciones aggressi quod posteritas ipsarum nacionum Peti et Pape non remansit. Sed verum est quod tunc non denominabatur Orcadia sed terra Petorum sicut clare verificatur, hodie adhuc cronica attestante; per mare dividens Scociam et Orcadiam quod usque ad hodiernum diem mare Petlandicum appellatur, et sicut pulchre subiungitur in iisdem cronicis Rex iste Haraldus Comatus primo applicuit in Zetlandiam cum classe sua et consequenter in Orcadia et contulit illam Orcadiam et Zetlandiam antedicto principi Rognaldo robusto ex cuius stirpe ut prefertur prefate due naciones, fuerant everse et destructe sicut cronice nostre clare demonstrant a quo quidem Rognaldo preceperunt linealiter et gradatim omnes Comites Orcadie et possederunt temporibus suis dictum comitatum libere, sine quacunque exactione, quocunque canone seu sensu, excepto obsequio prestando regibus Norwegie tributis ratione, sicut in clausula sequenti laciis patebit que in cronica de verbo in verbum continetur. Revera enim usque hodie illorum posteritatis dominio subjacent excepto quod jure tributario Norwegie regibus deserviunt, qui quidem princeps Rognaldus strenuissimus hujusmodi comitatum libere et jure donavit cuidam fratri suo Swardo nomine, qui comes Swardus procreavit quendam filium Gothornum nomine, qui comes Gothornus possedebat dictum comitatum per unum annum et decessit sine herede legitimo et sic reversus est dictus comitatus dicto principi Rognaldo, qui pure et libere illum contulit cuidam filio suo Eyward nomine, qui postea cognominabatur Turffeid, qui quidem per



per longa tempora possedebat dictum comitatum et habundavit opibus et plenus fuit divitiis.

Cui successit filius ejus Thorwider Gedclever, cui successit filius ejus Itlanderver, cui successit filius ejus Comes Swardus robustus ac corpulentus, magnus et strenuissimus bellifer, adhuc tamen non fuit regeneratus sacri baptismatis lavacro neque alii Comites prenominati. In cujusquidem Comitis Swardi diebus supervenit Olaus Thurgonus rex illustrissimus de occidentalium partium guerris, cujus induccione comes ille Swardus una cum gente Orcadie devenerunt, Christiani gentilitatie relinquentes errorem. Cui Comiti Swardo successit filius ejus comes Thurfinus procreatus ex filia quondam excellentissimi Principis Malcomi Regis Scotorum illustris.

Quiquidem rex contulit dicto Thurfino terras de Cathness et Sutherland sub unica denominatione comitatus in Scocia et illis gavissus est, una cum comitatu Orcadie Zetlandie et pluribus aliis dominiis in Scocie regno jacentibus et vixerat diu et strenuissimus erat in Campis post cujusquidem Comitis Thurfini obitum successit sibi ejus filius Comes Erlinus primus, et iste Erlinus primus, genuit Comitem Paulum et Erlinum secundum, qui Paulus Comes genuit Comitem Hacoïn, Comes Erlinus secundus procreavit Comitem Magnum gloriosissimum martyrem patronum Orcadie, qui sanctissime abiit ab hac luce virgo & martyr.

Post cujusquidem Magni martyris decessum, et post obitum Comitis Hacoïn successit Comes Rolandus qui primo fundavit ecclesiam Sancti Magni Martyris, illamque magnis possessionibus, divitiis, et redditibus dotavit, predictus virque sapientia et virtute pollebat per plura bona pietatis opera famabatur, venerabaturque et reputabatur pro sancto viro.

Post cujusquidem obitum successit ejus frater Ericus comitatui. Cui successit Comes Haraldus, Cui successit Comes Johannes filius ejus, Cui Johanni successit Comes Magnus secundus a quo Alexander Scotorum rex cepit comitatum de Sutherland, Cui Magno Comiti secundo successit Comes Gilbertus primus, cui successit Comes Gilbertus secundus ejus filius, qui gavissus est comitatibus Orcadie et Cathness in Scocia.

Qui quidem Gilbertus Secundus procreavit Magnum tertium et quandam filiam Matildam nomine iste Comes Magnus filius Gilberti secundi genuit



genuit Comitem Magnum quartum et quondam Joannem et ille Magnus comes quartus ab hac luce abiit sine prole, cui successit Joannes ejus frater in antedictis comitatibus Orcadie et Cathness Joannes iste genuit quendam magnum Comitem quintum. Cui Magno quinto jure successionis linealiter successit Dominus Malifius comes de Stratherne in Scotia tanquam heres legitimus jure hereditario ad utrosque comitatus Orcadie et Cathness sicut clarissime manifestant monumenta, evidencie et carte utrorumque regnorum Scotie et Norwegie. Qui quidem Comes Malifius revera primo desponsavit filiam comitis de Monteith in Scotia, et ex ea genuit filiam Matildam nomine post cujus quidem prime uxoris obitum desponsavit filiam quandam quondam Hugonis Comitis de Rossie et ex ea procreavit quatuor filias et decessit sine masculis sicque ejus dominia terrarum et possessiones fuerant divise inter illas filiam vero antiquiorem ex prima uxore procreatam Matildam scilicet duxit in uxorem Welandus de Ard, qui ex ea procreavit quendam filium Alexandrum de Ard, qui Alexander jure regni Scotie et consuetudine hereditaria successit Comiti Malifio de Stratherne in principali manerio sive manso ratione sue matris comitatus de Cathania, et possedebat jure et appellacione Comitis, et eadem ratione et eodem jure gavisus est certa perticata sive quantitate terrarum Orcadie et gerebat se pro balivo et capitaneo gentis Orcadie Norwegie regis ex parte idemque Alexander de Ard tempore suo vendidit et alienavit quondam recolende memorie Domino Roberto Stewart primo Scotorum regi dictum comitatum de Cathness mansum sive manerium principale et omnia alia jura spectancia seu concernancia ad se ratione matris ejus tanquam ad antiquiorem sororem jure et consuetudine regni Scotie cum denominatione comitatus sive Comitis iste vero Alexander finaliter decessit sine herede de suo corpore quocunque legitimo procreato.

Nunc vero certamus styllum ad quatuor filias ex secunda uxore procreatas, quarum una desponsata erat cum Domino Willielmo de Sancto Claro Domino le Sinclar qui Dominus Willielmus ex ea genuit Dominum Henricum de Sancto Claro qui Dominus Henricus desponsavit Jonnetam filiam Walteri de Haliburton Domini de Dirlitoun, et ex ea procreavit Dominum Henricum de Sancto Claro secundum qui ultimo decessit Comes Orcadie indubitatus qui in uxorem habuit venerabilem dominam Egidiam  
filiam



filiam filii antedicti quondam Domini Roberti Scotorum regis illustris filiamque quondam strenuissimi domini Willielmi de Douglas domini de Nydydale, et ex ea procreavit presentem dominum Willielmum de Sancto Claro comitem Orcadie, Dominum le Sinclair.

Quedam alia filia secunde uxoris desponsata fuit cum quodam milite denominato Here Ginfil de Swethrick partibus oriundo, qui vero miles in Orcadie partibus venit et jure ac ratione sue uxoris gavisus est quadam parte terrarum Orcadie que quidem uxor ab hac luce sine herede migravit legitimo ex suo corpore procreato.

Tertia vero filia secunde uxoris fuit nupta cum quodam Gothredo nomine Gothurno le Spere qui ex ea procreavit quendam filium Dominum Malisium le Spere militem qui tandem decessit sine herede legitimo de suo corpore genito similiter et quarta filia decessit sine herede ex suo corpore legitime procreato. Verum Iste Dominus Henricus primus dominus le Sinclair, ejus mater, Alexandro de Ard et domino Malisio Spere adhuc viventibus ad dominum nostrum supremum regem Norwegie adivit Hacoïn nomine cum quo rege certas fecit pactiones, condiciones et ap-pun&uamenta per quas reversus est ad Orcadie partes illisque gavisus est usque ad extremum vite sue comesque Orcadie obiit et pro defensione patrie mihi crudeliter ab inimicis peremptus est. Et post decessum istius Henrici comitis primi in orcadie partibus supervenit dicti Comitis Henrici primi mater filia Domini Malisii Comitis prenominati et ibi fixe remansit usque post obitum filii ejus Henrici Comitis primi et supervixerat post obitum omnium fororum suarum, filiorum filiarumque suorum sic quod ipsius antedicti quondam Comitis Henrici primi mater successit omnibus fororibus ejus eorundemque, filiis et filiabus tanquam unica et legitima heres comitatus Orcadie et terrarum de Cathnes sibi tanquam uni forori debitarum parte duntaxat et porcione exceptis sororis sue antiquioris de terris de Cathnes sub denominatione et appellacione comitatus sive comitis quam partim ut superius dictum est alienavit et vendidit ipse quondam Alexander de Ard regi Scocie prenominato, hujusque rei testes sunt adhuc viventes fide digni qui ipsum matrem Henrici primi oculis viderunt labiisque sunt locuti cum ea communicantes ad plenum, cui successit ejus nepos Henricus Secundus filius primi Henrici, cui Henrico Secundo successit presens et superstes Dominus Willielmus comes modernus Dominus le Sinclair.

Excellentissime



Excellentissime princeps ut premissimus in principio ita fine protestamur quod vestra serenissima regia sublimitas ac ipsius benignissima majestas iusta ingenii nostri modulum et sensuum capacitatem nos linguamque naturam incultam nebulis ignorantia multipliciter obfuscata velit rudes indoctos a rhetorica scientia alienos infecunda facundia ignaros habere excusatos quamvis barbarico more non poetice locutionis, modo grosso loquamur, quia insulares sumus a literarum scientia penitus alieni, imo quod condecienti rhetorice locucionis stilo sive scriptura non referimus vestre regie majestatis ea et nos submittimus correctione.

Sed verum est ut attestamur quod more nostro barbarico omnia que superius vestre majestati scribimus vera sunt, quia ex antiquis libris, scripturis autenticis, cronicis approbatis et relationibus fide dignorum antecessorum nostrorum, ac infeodacionibus nostris ecclesiarum nostrarum ista extruximus et compilavimus. Et si opus esset plura quam in presenti epistola vestre celsitudine lacius manifestare, sciremus ipsamque in premissis informare, sed quia longa solent sperni, hæc pauca sufficiunt pro presenti et ut hec nostra epistola taliter qualiter compilata vestre regie majestati ac dominis vestri consistorii et palatii circa latera vestra existentibus majorem fidem ac roboris firmitatem faciat animos vestros ad plenum informet ac inter archana pectorum vestrorum radicem emittat veritatis firmam et ceteros Christi fideles sancta matris Ecclesie filios instruat ad Deum et sacro-sancta Dei evangelia per nos corporaliter tacta juramus quod premissa modo quo super relata deponimus ad Dei honorem vestreque celsitudinis, predecessoris mandatum & non alias nec prece nec precio, odio, amore, vel favore vel sub spe cujuscunque muneris presentis vel futuri, sed pro veritate duntaxat dicenda. In quorum omnium et singulorum fidem et testimonium premissorum sigilla Thome Episcopi, Canonorum et Capituli antedictorum, totiusque populi et communitatis patrie nostre Orcadie quod dicitur sigillum commune et mei Henrici Randle legiferi in nostra publica et generali sessione non sine magna maturitate et plena digestionem presentibus sunt appensa apud Kirkwaw mensis Maii die quarto anno Domini millesimo quadringentesimo tertio.



## APPENDIX, No. II.

DEAN GULE'S TRANSLATION *of the foregoing DEDUCTION of the ORKNEY COUNTS, transcribed from the Original Copy bound in with Dr. BENNET'S Book of Battles, a MS. originally belonging to the Family of ROSLIN, the Second Page being subscribed by WILLIAM SINCLARE of ROSLIN, at whose Desire the Dean says this Translation was made. It afterwards fell into the Hands of Dr. GEORGE MACKENZIE, who, in the Beginning of the Third Volume of his Lives, mentions it at large, giving us also an Extract from the first Part of the following Translation. The late Mr. JAMES MACKENZIE had the MS. from HILDIN, Dr. GEORGE'S Nephew; which he again gave to the Lord SINCLARE, who promised to lodge it in the Advocate's Library, Edinburgh.*

FOR whereas witnesfit that venerable and maist he cronographor Martin, penetentiar and capalane of our Lord the Pape, amongs others caris and sollicituds of this flowand warld, the labilite and brevite of tymes, manners, and of men, in this vale of tairs, beand considered, it apperith neidfill to set furthe be rycht the genealogiis of progenitors, kings, princifs, and of others preclare nobles, be the quilks this warld transfore is rewlit, kings regnnis, and princes are gydit speciale, quhilks ar beleivit to proceed maist liklie be deduction and knowladge of the weritie of the succeffion of them forsaide. Heirfor, to the illustrie and maist excellent Lord our Prince Supreme, King of Norwege, and to his succeffors, princifs, patritiis, consuls, and to all hie parsonis of the saide realme, Thomas, be the graice of God and of the Seitt-apostolike, Bishop of Orcadie and Zetlandie, the Channorrie of the Cathedrale Kirk of the maist glorious martyre Seinct Mawnis, the law-leder, and others steitlie parsonis, nobles, pepill, and commonitie of the famying, grace, pace, and charity, joye enduring mercie fra the Fader Omnipotent and fra Christ in the Haly Sprite be with you

11

all,



all, be quhom kings regnis, and in quhois power ar the harts of kings, We prompt and reddie, with all subjection, humilitie, and obedience, cometand and desyrand zoure weilfaire in the entrals of Jesu Christ, with luse onfenzied, requirand to that zour kingly henefs not mak supple in things to be schawin be oure simplicitie, and for that we knaw furlie and be the space of laing tyme, experience beand maistrefs effecient of fuire things has techit us that thing quhilk we receveit not as dowsome how that your regalie henes exercant his all tymes abundant luse toward the Earlis of Orcadie, for quhilk thing we bair fuire howp and obtenis full believe that zour kinglie majestie sell benignlie resave, diligentlie onderstand, and effectuilie prosequite oure wordis; allwa, that your kinglie sinceritie, as it seems to consider vefilis within closour of breift, and diligentlie to tak heid that we wryt na matter of flattrie to zour serenitie, for quhy, as Peter Blesens fais in his prolage, we intend not to be sellers of ule, but forthshawers of the veritie.

Heirfore we belief it to be worthie, godlie, and meritable to mak just witnessing to the weritie; that the weritie be not hide nor smurit down, that veritie eiffest throw laik of the quhilk prejudice ma be ganerit contrair ane innocent, and quhaire bayth ar giltie, he quhilk hydes the waritie, and he quhilk fais ane lee; for quhy, that parson will not prefeit, and this parson desyris to noye, the quhilk bayth God mot tourne fra us for famekle we haue been monest afor tyme be patent writings of wmquhill Ericus, zour prediceffor, our King, of wirschipfull memorie, as to beir witnessing to the varitie in fewe things to be knawin and schawin, lik as fall be maid patent at mair length in thir writings following.

Now, fra ym it is that we Thomas, bischop, chanons of the chapter, lawledder, and others staitie men, nobillis, pepill and commontie forsaids, before God, with faith and fidelity, be the quilk we ar astrictit to zour Kingly Maiestie, faythfullie attestis, and to perpetuale memorie deduces and maks faitht to zou and to all others, present and for to cum, faythfuls in Jesu Christ, sonnis of the Haly Modir Kirk, in form and effect as follows.

In our presence, togidder assemblit, compearand ane magnifat and prepotent Lord Wilzem of Sanct Clare, Erile of Orcadie and Lord of Sinclare, in the Cathedrall Kirk of Saint Mawnis martyre in Orchardie, has proponit in



this manner, the quhilk Lord hes presupponit that wele and fowlie that thing was knawin till ws, that lang tymis afore bypast, his antecessors and progenitors and thai Eirlis of Orcadie, iustlie, lawfullie and inforably, lini-alie and gre be gre, be jure hereditare, hed succedit to the forsaide eirledom of Orchadie, and withoute any strange geneolige enterand betwix, had be lang tyme bruikit the same quietly, and how that divers charters, evidents, instruments, compt buks, and others divers kinds of probations, war consumit be fyre, tint and alienat, in the tyme of hostilite, and of wers of unfriendfull iniimiis, throw laik and wanting of ane suir howfs or mansion inexpugnable, quhare siklike forsaids my bene furlie in dew place kepit. [Heirfor the said Lord and Erile supponit that it was well knawin till us how our supreme Lord Mawnis, maist illustre King of Norwege, hed directit till wmquhill our predecessors his patent letters for his progenitors Earle Malifius, exhortand thame and chargand them to deliver to the said Malifius Erile, all charters, evidens, and letters of previledge pertinent to hyme concernent the Erildome of Orchadie.] (a)

The said Lord and Erile als wa allegit that he had letters patent of our umquhill supreme Lord illustre King Ericus, the quhilks he schew till ws, and causit to be red perfectly weile, continand precepts onder followand; that is to say, gif one of us, ane or ma, had ony charters, evidents, or letters of priveleges extinent till progenitors, antecessors, or till hymself, concernand his erildome, that without delaye, and but tarie or contradiotioun or obstacle quhatsumewer, we suld deliwer the sameing to the said Lord Erile astir as we would schaw the King's indignation.

Be the virtue of the quhilks letters, as the same proposition of the Erile contained, he requirit ws, that gif we had of sicklike forsaids kastles, ony things in our schrinis, cophirs, theks, kists, armoreis, or chartor wards, we suld deliver the sameing till hyme; and be caifs we had not the sameing, bot suld knaw siclike hed be others, than that we suld mak hyme knowledge of sic things, and not hald quiet in secrete; and gif we knew not be ane or others of the forsaids, than he requirit ws, be the authority of the sameing letters, that we, hawand God, justice and equite, afore our eis, toward declaratioun of verite, wald wyslie, studisslie, riplie, with di-

(a) All within this crotchet is wanting in the Latin copy.



geft myndis, agayne and agayne, and thriddlie furthseik scriptours, autentike cronicks, and approbat quhilk makes fayth as to perfeittlie rede, the saming diligentlie behold, hailfullie consaive and onderstand, and als wa oure infeodacions and fundacions of kirks to consider cleirlye; the quhilks things be and swa riplie furthsocht and fowlie discussit, he requirit we wald mak manifest till oure supreme Lord, be genealogiis and autentick croniks, be the quhilks the said Lord Wilzem, Erile, procedit linialie, gre be gre, and how lang tyme his predecessors and he had josit the said erildome, justlie, well, and onschorittlie, with their universale and singular this, commodities, asyaments, and just pertinents, that the sam succession suld not be prolongat or the detful memorie of men.

Their forsaids allswo proponit, awisit, discussit, digestit riplie, and fowlie conswavit and understand, yet when first divers and singall tractats beand had fra thin to thin to the honour of God Omnipotent, manifestatioun of veritie to obedience, and to the reverence of oure supreme Lord the King, as sonnys of obedience, we preceptors mandators, as fit seims in sic things, quhilk we have heard be oure elders, than quhilks we have red, onderstand and consavit, and with haile effect fowlie hes digestit be buks, scriptures, be cronicks of bayth the kingdomis of Norwege and Scotland, and of the progenitors of thame, swa for thi singull singularlie, and univers universlie, with ane mynd, ane fayth, ane consent and assent, we answer fayth as foirsaid is, and witnessing of veritie makand till all above written, that all kinds of strenght of chartors, of evidents, of hand-writts, of instruments of codicills, and of all others quhilksomever probacions quhilks war toward us for the reverence of oure supreme Lord the King, we have deliverit and giffen to the said Lord Erile concerning the foresaid erildome.

But true it is and in veritie, we bair witnessing be the relatione of oure faythfull antecessors and progenitors, that the principall manse or manerie of thame Lords Erils of Orchadie hes been syndrie tymis brint and reducit till nocht, and all uterlie distroit, and the hail countrie spulzeit and wastit be oure on friends and enemiis; throw the quhilks depredacions, consumptions and destructions, we beleive that the principall evidence, chartors, and others divers patent letters, hes beene and ar alienat, consumit, pertenant or concernand to the antecessors and progenitors of the said Lord Erile, and



that throw default of ane castell-house, in the quhilk the said evidents, chartors, and others towels of the cuntre, my<sup>e</sup>. been fowerlie kepit.

And as to the linialie progress and successioun of greis of the said Lord Erile, and of his antecessors or progenitors Erils of Orchardie, we prenominate above expressit, after ingine, knowlege and onderstanding, riplie avisit, and cleirlye hes socht furth, be divers kinds of tongues, scriptours, autentick and approbat cronicks in Latine and Norwege tongue, be the quhilks we have fund the infeodations of our kirks, or genealogiis and of our antecessors, chartors and evidents of ws and of thame furthshawand, and with ane fair manner of stile makand witneffing and fayth; In the whilks croniks, buks, chartors, and others autentiks scriptors, we have fund the namis of divers Eriles of Orchardie, the tymis of the infeodations of thame, after the manner and forme followand.

Bot of thair stowt and notable operations, gests, namis of thair sonnys and douchters, of the manner of deing of the division or union of thair heritage, of the encreasing or detriment of thair possessions, becaus of schorting at this time, we lat pass, and referrs ws till auld croniks and genealogiis autentik and approbat.

Swa we find, with the first, that in the tyme of Harold Comate, first King of Norwege, quhilk josit the haill kingdome, this land, or cuntre insulare of Orchardie, was inhabitat and manurit be twa nations, callit Peti and Pape, quhilk twa nations, indeid, war all wterlie and clenlie destroyit be the Norwegens, of the clan or tribe of the maist stowt Prince Rognald; quhilks Norwegens swa passit on the said nations of Peti and Pape, that the posteritie of thame after remained nocht: But true it is that the land was not callit Orchardie, but the land of the Pets, as it is at this time, ane cronik makand witneffing, cleirlye verifit, be ane see dividand Scotland and Orchardie, the quhilk see till this day is callit Petland Firthe, and as it follows clearlie in the sam croniks.

This King Harold Comate first arrivit in Schetland with his navie of schippis, and efterward in Orchardie, and gaif the same and Schetland to the forsaidd Prince Rognald the Stout, be quhois clan, as our croniks cleirlye schawis, the forsaidd nations (as forsaids) was wterlie downthrawn and distroyit; fra the quhilks Rognald procedit linealie, gre be gre, all Erills  
of



of Orchadie, and has brukit for their tymis the said erildome frelie, without onie exaction, without challance or paiment, except homage to be made to the Kings of Norwege, be reffoun of tribut, as fall be schawin at mair length in the clausis followand, quhilk is continit word be word in the cronik.

[Trew it is, that the lands onderliis the dominion of the posterity of thame till this day, except that be law of tribut tha deserve to the Kings of Norwege.]

The quhilks Prince Rognald the Stout gaif the same erildome frelie and purlie till his brodir callit Sward, quhilk Earle Sward begot ane sone callit Gothorm; quhilk Erile Gothorm brukit the earldome for ane zeir, and deceffit butt lawfull aire, and fwa the said erildome reterit agayne to the said Prince Rognald, quhilk purlie and frelie gaif the same to his sone, to name callit Enar, quhilk afterward wes callit be for-name Turff-Einar, the quhilk be lang tyme brukit the said erildome, habundand in my<sup>e</sup>. and riches to the quhilk succedet his sone Thurwydermus Clevar, capitale callit in wlgar langage Thurwyder Hufsa-Clever; to the whilk succedit his sone Erile Holoadver; to the quhilk succedit his sone Erile Sward the Wicht and Corpulent, ane grett and maist stowt batteller, zit when as zit he was not regenerate be the lawer of halie baptism, nor zet tha Erils forsaide: In the quhilks Erile Sward's daais, be chans there came Olave of Thurgon, King maist illustre fra the wars of the west parts, be quhois induction the said Erile, togiddir with the pepill of Orchadie, refusand the error of gentilitie, became Christianis; to the quhilk Erile Sward succedit his sone Erile Thurfine, procreate of the dochter of umquhill the maist excellent Prince Malcome, illustre King of Scotts; the quhilks King gaif to the said Thurfine the lands of Cathanie and of Sutherlandie in Scotland, under ane denomination of erildome, and he josit the lands, togiddir with the erildome of Orchadie and Schetland, and fundrie other dominionis lyand in the kingdom of Scotland. He had lang life, and was ane man of he wastage in fields.

After the whilk Erile Thurfines's decefs, succedit till hyme his sone Erile Erline the First, and this Erile Erline the First begat Erile Paule and Erline the Second; the quhilk Erile Paule begat Erile Halcone; Erline the



the Second Erile of Orchadie, procreat Erile Mawnis, maist glorious martyre, patroun of Orchadie, the quhilk of maist halie lyfe passit fra this licht till overlestand, virgine, and Martyre; efter the quhilk halie Mawnis Martyres decefs, and efter the obite of Erile Hacon, succedit Erile Rolland, quhilk first fundit the Kirk of Sanct Mawnis Martyre, and dotat the fame with great possessiouns, riches, and rents.

The forsaide man was wyfe and of gret virtue, and, thraw many dedis of pietie, was diwlgat, and wirchipit, and honorat for ane halie man: Efter quhois obite succedit his brothir Ericus to the erildome; to the whilk succedit Eril Harald; to the quhilk Eril Joane, his sone; to the quhilk Earle Joane succedit Eril Mawnis the Secund, fra the quhilk Alexander King of Scotts tuk the erildome of Sutherlandie; to the quhilk Eirle Mawnis the Secund succedit Eril Gilbert the First; to the quhilk succedit Eirle Gilbert the Secund, his sone, quhilk josit the erildomis of Orchadie and Cathanie in Scotland; the quhilk Gilbert the Secund procreate Eril Mawnis the Third, and ane dochter, callit to name Matilda.

This Erile Mawnis, sonne of Gilbert the Second, begat Erile Mawnis the Ferd, and ane Jonne; and that Eril Mawnis the ferd deit without ane barne; to the quhilk succedet Jonne his brodir in the forsaide erildomes of Orchadie and Cathanie. This Joanne begat ane Mawnis the fyft Erile; to the quhilk Mawnis the Fyft be just succession linealie succedit Lord Malisius, Eirle of Stratherne (Stratherin) in Scotland, as lawfull aire be law of heritage, till bayth the eirldomis of Orchadie and Cathanie, lyk as the strenthis, evidents, and charters of the confirmations thairupon maid of bayth the kingdomis of Scotland and Norwege cleirlye maks manifest. The quhilk Erile Malisius first despowsit the dochter of the Erile of Meinteith in Scotland, and begat on hir ane dochter callit Matilda be name; efter the quhilks first wywifs decefs he despowsit ane dochter of wmqhill Hewe Erile of Ross, and procreat of hire fower dochters, and deceffit without men-children, swa that his lordschipis of lands and possessionis war dividit amangs them.

Weland of Ard despowsit the eldest dowchter procreate of his first wyfe, the quhilk dowchtter was callit Matilda; the quhilk Weland Ard procreate of hir ane sonne, callit Alexander of Arde; the quhilk Alexander



ander of Ard, be the law of Scotland and conswetude heritagible, succedit till Eril Malifius of Stratheren, in the principall manering, or manse of the erildome of Cathanie, be reffoun of his mothir and brukit the same be law and appellatioun of ane Erile; and be the same law and reffoun he chosit ane sons part or quantite of the lands of Orchardie, as partinand and belongand, efter the law of Norwege, to the eldest sifter be jure of heritage: And the same Alexander of Arde in his tyme sald and alienate till umq<sup>u</sup> of wirschipfull memorie Lord Robart Stewart, first King of Scotts, the said erildome of Cathanie, the mans or manerie, and all others richts belangand or concernand, till hyme be reffoun of his modir, as till eldest sifter by law and conswetude of the kingdome of Scotland belangand, with denominatioun of erildome, or of erile: Trewlie this Alexander finalie deceffit without any quhilksumever lawfull aire procreate of his bodie.

Now, trully we must turn oure still to the foure sifers procreate of the secund wyfe, or spows, of the quhilk ane was spowffit to Lord Wilzem of Sanct-Clare, Lord Sinclair; the quhilk Lord Wilzem begat on hire Lord Henrie Sanct-Clare; quhilk Lord Henrie Sinclare despowfit Janet the dowchtter of Walter Haliburtoun, Lord of Dirletoun, and begat Lord Henrie Sanclair the Secund; quhilk at the last deceffit ondouted Eirle of Orchardie and Schetland; the quhilk he despowfit ane wirchipfill ladie callit Gelis Dowglafs, the dowchtter of the dowchtter of the foresaid Lord Robart Stewart, illustrie King of Scotts, and the dowchtter wmq<sup>u</sup>hill of the maist stowt Lord Wilzem of Douglafs, Lord of Nithisdale, and of hire procreat be this present Lord Wilzem of Sanctclare, Erile of Orchardie, Shetland, Erile of Cathness, Lord Sinclare, and Lord of Nithisdale and vailey of Necht.

Than trwlie ane other dowchtter of the secund wyfe was despowffit with ane knycht callit Hergifill, borne in the parts of Swecie; the quhilk kny<sup>t</sup> cam in the parts of Orchardie; and be law and reffoun of his wyfe, josit ane part of the lands of Orchardie, the quhilk wyfe deit without airs lawfull begottin of hir bodie. The third dowchtter of the secund wyfe was mariit with ane callit to name Gothorme Spere; the quhilk procreate of hir ane son Sr. Malifius Spere, Kny<sup>t</sup>; the quhilk deceffit without lawfull aire of his bodie; and swa the ferd sifter deceffit without lawfull aire procreate of hire bodie.



Than of trewecht this Lord Henrie, first Lord Sinclair (his modir Alexander Ard, and Sir Malisius Speir beand on lyfe), past till oure supreme Lord, King of Norwege [here a word or two are left blank, which the Latin copy supplies thus, *Hacoiné nomine*], with the quhilk king he made certane refonis, conditions, and appunctaments, be the quhilks he retirrit to the parts of Orchadie, and josit them to the latter tyme of his lyfe, and deit Erile of Orchadie, and for the defence of the country was slain thare cruelle by his enemiis; and efter the decefs of this Henrie, first Erile of Orchadie, in the parts of Orchadie, cam be chans the modir of the said Erile Henrie the First, the dowchtter, as is said of Lord Malisius, eirle prenominate, and baid continuallie thair aftir the decefs of hir son Henrie, the first erile, and brukit lyfe after the decefs of all hir sisters sonnis and dowchters, swa that sche, modir of the foresaid Erile Henrie the First, succedit till all her sisters, and till all the sonnis and dowchters of tham, as onlie ane and lawfull aire of the erildome of Orchadie, and of the lands of Cathanie, belangand till hire as till ane anelie sister, ane part and portion anlie, except of hire elder sister, of the lands of Cathanie, onder the denomination and appellatioun of the Eirdome or Eirle; the quhilk part, as said is, Alexander of Ard alienat and sald to the prenominate King of Scotland, of this thing thare beine faythfull witnes as zit lewand on lyfe, quhilk saw the modir of Henrie the First, and spake withe hire at length; to the quhilk succeeded hir newo Henrie the Secund, sonne of Henrie the First; to the quhilk Henrie the Secund; succedit, zit present and on lyfe, Lord Wilzem, erile modern, and Lord Sinclare.

Maist excellent Prince, as we promitted at oure entre, swa now at the end we protest, that zour maist serene kinglie Henefs, and maist bening Majestie will hawe us efter the manner of our ingenie and capacity of oure sensis rude and onlernit, but science rethoricall, but plentiful eloquence and oure tong, als allwiis obfuscate mornat, throw the dirkness of ignorance excusit; and that swabeit we speik grossie, why in barbar manner (not as poets) to be excusit for yi? Ve ar insulars dwelland in Illis fivirit al uterlie fra science of letters; and for that we have not set furth the foresaids with ane flemand stile, or with scriptours of rethoricall eloquence, we submit ourself and the daitment of the said forsaids ioyfullie to the correction of zour kinglie Majestie. But trew' it is as we mak  
wit-



witnessing, that all the forsaids, quhilk we have written be oure barbar manner to zour Majestie are true, for sameikle that out of auld buks, autentik scriptours, approbat croniks, and be reportings faythfull of oure ald antecessors, and be infeodacions of our kirks, we have outdrawin and compilit the faming, and gif need had been till have shawin forder, or informat than in the premisses conteinit in this present epistill till zour Cel- situde, we culd have dressit the same bot for why large proces be tedious to heir, lat thir forsaids for this tyme present be sufficient. And that this oure epistill this, and swa compilit to zour kinglie Majestie, and to the collaterale lords of zour consistorie or palace, ma mak the mair faytth an sikkernefs of strenght, informe zour mynds fowlie and amangs zour se- cret breists furthset the four rote of verite, and ma instruct others Chri- stianis sonis of the halie modir kirk, we swair be God, and be the halie Evangills of God corporallie tuhechit be ws, that we depone the pre- mises in the manner abuff shawin, to the honour of God, and at the command of the predecessors of zour Henefs, and na othirwaiis nother for praior, nor for price, hatrent, luf, or for favour, nor for houp of quhatsumever reward present or to cum after, but for the veritie anlie to be said.

To the faytth and witnessing of all and singulare thir premissis oure falis, that is to mene the fail of Bischop Thomas, and of the chanonis of the chaptre foresaids, and of all the pepill and commonite of the cuntrie of Orchadie, quhilk is callit the commune fail, the fail of myn, Henrie Rendale law-man of Nicholie Tullach myn, of Joane Cragy my armig, of Richard Fodringame Lawrik-men myn, of Alexander Sinclare myn, of Joane Tod myn, of James Lask myn, of Alexander Broun myn, and of Agnus Mangson myn, with certane sawlis of others faythfull par- sonis of the cuntrie, till thair presents ar to. Hangit at Kirkwaw in Or- chadie, the first day of the moneth of Junii, the zer of oure Lord ane thousand 4 hundredrecht and 40 sex.

Translatit out of Latin into Scotts, by me *Deine Thomas Gwle*, munk of Newbothill, at the request of ane honorable man, *Wil- zem Sanclair*, barroun of *Roslin*, *Pechtland*, and *Harberschire*. An. Dom. 1554.



## APPENDIX, No. III.

*From SIR JAMES BALFOUR'S CATALOGUE of the SCOTTISH NOBILITY, MS. in the Advocate's Library, Edinburgh. He was LORD LYON KING AT ARMS in the Beginning of KING CHARLES THE FIRST'S Reign.*

## ORKNAY.

1. SIUARD the Second, brothir to Rinald the Stout furnamed, ves, by Comatus King of Norway, created Earle by, of Orkney and Catnefs, in anno [blank]. Quhom this Earll Siuard marriit, as zit I am not veill enformed, bot he left issheu a sone to succeed him named Guthred.
2. Guthred, sone and aire to Siuard, ves, aftir his father's death, Earll of Orkney and Catnefs. He died issheulefs, never being married, in anno [blank], and left Ewar (the sone of Rinald the Stout) his brodir, quhome he had adopted to succeed him.
3. Ewar, the sone of Rinalde the Stoute, succedit to his uncle [Rinald], and ves third Earle of Orkney and Catnefs. Quhome he married as zet I am not fuirly informed; bot he hed isheu a sonne that succedit him, named Thurwyder-Hufi-clewar.
4. Thurwyder-Hufi-clewar succedit to hes father Ewar, and ves fourth Earll of Orkney and Catnefs. Quhome he married as zet I am not veil informed; but he hed isshew a son that succeeded him, named Hallandye.
5. Hallandye succidit to his father Earll Threwidder-hufi-clewar, and wes fifth Earll of Orchardie and Catnefs. Quhome he married as zit I am not veill informed; bot he left isshew a sonne named Siuard that succedet him.
6. Siuard, furnamed the Rich, in respect he conquered the quholl Iylles, and made hymselfe Lord of them, succidit to hes father Hollandye, and ves sixth Earll of Orkney, and Lord of the Isles; at the perswasion of ane halie man, named Alans, he renuncit hes paganiffime, and ves bab-



tized, receaving the Christian faith. He married Plantula, the sister of Malcome the Third (surnamed Keanmore), King of Scotland, and hed isshu a sone named Thurfone that succit him.

7. Thurfone succidit to hes fether Siuard, and wes 7th Earll of Orkney, Catness, and the Iyllis. This Earle Thurfone quyt-claimed all right and tytill he had to the earldome of Catness, and resigned in the King hes unckel's hands, for a new infestment to be given to himselfe, of the earlldomis of Orkney and Iylles, vich he tooke haldin of him. Quhome he married as zit I am not weill informed; bot he hed isshu a sone named Erlyne that succedit him. He departed this mortal lyffe at Bressay Castell in Orkney, in anno [blank].

8. Erlyne succidit his father Thurfone, and wes 8th Erile of Orkney and the Isles. Quhome he married as zit I am not certaine; bot he left 2 sones, betwixt quhome he devidit the earledome, giffing the eldest, Paule, the earldome of Orknay, and the second, Erlyne, the Iylles of Schetland.

9. Paule succedit to his father Erlyne, and wes 9th Earll of Orkney. He killed his brothir Erlyne, and took from him the Isles of Shetland, Faray, and Fule. I have not as zit learnt quhome he married; but he hed isshu a sone that did succid him, named Hacone.

10. Hacone, sone, aire to Earle Paul, succidit hes father, and wes 10th Earll of Orkney and the Iylles. This cruell tyrant killed Mawrius, or Magnus, the virgin patroness of Orknay, thereafter canonized by Pape Innocent the First, in anno [blank]. Quhome this Earll married as zit I am not certain; bot he had isshew twa sones, one named Rouland, that did succid him (the eldest), and Erick the 2d, that succidit his brother.

11. Rouland succedit to hes father Hacone, and wes the 11th Earle of Orkney and the Iyllis. He was a very devout and religeous man. He built the church of St. Magnus in Kirkwall; and, never being married, diet without isshu about the age of 26 zeirs, leving his brother Erick to succeed him.

12. Ericus, or Erick, 2d sone to Hacone, succidit hes brother Rouland (quho died without airs of hes own body), and wes 12th Earll of Orkney.



I do not as zit understand quhome he married ; bot he hed ifsheu a sone named Herauld, that succit him.

13. Haurauld succedit his father Erick, and ves 13th Earll of Orknay and Catness. He killed John, Bishop of Catness, very treacherously under colour of friendship. This Earll Harould, for his oppressions and villanies, wes forfaulted by K. Villiame, and shortlie thereafter, in houpe and promise of his loyaltie and amendment, by the said King wes againe restorit.

Quhome this Earll married as zet I am uncertain ; bot he hed a sone named Johne that succedit him.

14. Jhone succedit to hes father Harauld, and wes 14th Earll of Orkney. [In a different hand, and with different ink], “ and mariit Blanc Basse, daughter to King Villiame, and hed ifsheu a sone, Magnus Earll of Orkney, and Lord of Zetland ; ” [immediately before what had been written in the same hand with the MS., (which, by comparifon with Sir James’s handwriting in other books, I consider as his own), this is scored out, viz. “ I have not as zit learnit quhome he mariit, bot he had ifsheu a soun, Magnus that succidit him.”]

15. Magnus succidit to hes father, and wes 15th Earll of Orkney. Quhome he did marie, as zit I am not veill informed ; bot he hed ifshue a sone, named Gilbert, that deyed before him, and a daughter, married to Malifius Speir Earle of Stratherne, named Matilda.

This Magnus Earle of Orkney is vitnefs in a tretty of pece betwix K. Rob. the First and Haco King of Norway, of the dait [what follows, viz. ‘ At Birren, in *anno* 1312,’ though just enough, is yet with different ink scored out.] He is also witnefs in a despositioun of the Eyllands, thus dashed out [the *Æbudæ* he means], made by the said King Haco to Rob. 1st, confirming a former despositioun made by his predecessor, then King of Norway, to Alexander the 3d of that name, King of Scotland.

16. Malifius Speir, Earll of Stratherne, in right of his vyfe Matilda, sole air of Magnus Earll of Orkney, ves the 16th Earll of Orkney. Quhome this Earll Malifius married I am not certain ; but he hed ifshue two daughters. Isabell, the eldest, wes married to Williame Earle of Ross, with quhome he did get the earldom of Catness ; Lucia, the second daughtter, wes married to Sir Villiame St Clare. [What next follows is scored out with different ink,

“ viz.



" viz. the dispositioun wich this Earll made of the earledome of Catness to his eldest daughtter is of the date in anno 1344, vich dispositione was confirmed by King David the 2d in anno 1362." ] This Earll Malifius wes forfeaulted by King David 2d in anno 1355, for alienating the earldome of Stratherne to the Earle of Varren, ane Englishman, the King enemie, and all his possessions annexit to the Crown.

17. Sir Henrie St Clare, the sone and air of Sir Villiame St Clare, by Lucia, 2d daughtter to Malife Earll of Stratherne, Orkney and Catness, wes, after the forfealtre of his grandfather by King David the 2d, created Earll of Orkney and Lord of Zetland. He married Jeane Haleburtone, eldest daughtter to Valter Lord Dirletoune, and hed isheu a sone named Henrie, that succedit him.

18. Henry Sinclair, sone and air to Henrie, 1st Earll of Orkney of that name, succedit hes father. He was created Duck of Oldenburgh by Christiernus, or Christianus, istius nominis primus Danorum Rex. He married Geills Douglafs, sole air of Villiame Douglafs Lord of Nidsdale, (quho was slain by the Lord Clifford on the bridge of Dantfick); by quhome he hed isheu a sone named Villiame, that succedit him. This Earll was one of the Knights of St Michael.

This Earle [in a different hand, and with different ink] was taken prisoner by the Engliche, in convoying King James the First to France, 30 Martis in anno 1404. Boethius, Lib. 13.

19. William Sinclair, sone and air to Henrie Earll of Orkney, succedit his father. This Earll stylys himselfe, in ane chartour of the lands of Rosline, given be him to Oliver St Clare his sone, Villielmus de Sancta Clara Comes Orcadiæ, Duck de Oldenburgh, Dominus Sinclair, Dyfart, Caussland, Roslyne, Herbertshire, Pyntland, Nidsdale, and Noviburgi, limitum orientalium et occidentaliu prefectus, Baro de Ecford et Cavertone, Magnus Scotiæ Admirallus et Camerarius, et aurii velleris eques. He married Margaret Douglafs, eldest daughtter to Archibald, surnamed Tyneman, Earll of Douglafs, and Duck of Turyne in France, and hed isheu a sone, named Villiame the Waster, that married Elisabeth Leslie, daughter to George Earll of Rothes, & hed isheu a sone named Henrie, that 1st Lord St Clare of Ravensburgh. Villiame the Waster dyed before his father, and was interred







| From Torfæus and the Orkneyinga Saga. |                                                      | From the Diploma in Wallace's Orkneys.                                |           |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Ab. 996.                              | Sigurd II. Slain 1014.                               | Sivard.                                                               | 27. 5.    |
| 1014.                                 | Sumarlid. }                                          |                                                                       | 45. 5.    |
|                                       | Einar. } Sons of Sigurd.                             |                                                                       | 45. 5.    |
|                                       | Brusi. }                                             |                                                                       | 45. 5.    |
|                                       | Thorfin made Earl, about 1028.                       | Thurfin, son of Sigurd II. by a daughter of Malcolm King of Scotland. | 51. 5.    |
|                                       | Roguvald.                                            |                                                                       | 55. 45.   |
| 1064.                                 | Paul. }                                              | Erlin. }                                                              | 67. 91.   |
|                                       | Erlend. }                                            | Paul. }                                                               | 67. 91.   |
| 1099.                                 | Erling.                                              | Erlin. II.                                                            | — 116.    |
| 1103.                                 | Hacon. }                                             | Hacoin. }                                                             | 90. 141.  |
|                                       | Magnus I. }                                          | Magnus I. }                                                           | 86. 132.  |
|                                       | (Sanctus)                                            |                                                                       |           |
|                                       | Slain by Hacon, 1110.                                |                                                                       |           |
| 1115.                                 | Harold I. }                                          |                                                                       | 91. 141.  |
|                                       | Paul. }                                              |                                                                       | 91. 141.  |
|                                       | Koli, or Roguvald, 1130-1159. }                      | Roland.                                                               | 98. 169.  |
|                                       | Erlend to 1158. }                                    | Eric.                                                                 | 129. 327. |
|                                       | Harald II. son of Madad Earl of Athole, 1150-1198. } | Harild.*                                                              | 113. 231. |
|                                       | Harald III. Ungi 1190-1191. }                        |                                                                       | 145. 407. |

\* Here is a deficiency in the Diploma, evidently owing to the compiler mistaking Harald I. and II. for the same person; a common cause of error in old chronicles. The Orkneyinga Saga being written so near the time, is full and correct concerning these omitted Earls. It ends with John: and the account of Torfæus, afterwards, is very lame; so that the Diploma deserves much credit. To Magnus V. he adds an Argifel, 1343, who witnesses a charter that year; but had surely only the title; and an Eringift, 1357, apparently the same person. See Orcades, p. 173. Mr Pinkerton's Introduction to the History of Scotland.



| From Torfæus and the<br>Orkneyinga Saga. |   | From the Diploma in<br>Wallace's Orkneys. |           |
|------------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Ab. 1198. David to 1215.                 | } |                                           |           |
| Jon to 1231.                             |   | John.                                     | 154. 419. |
| 1231. Magnus II.                         |   | From whom Alex. took Sutherland.          | 163. —    |
| 1239. Gibbon.                            |   | Gilbert I.                                | 165. —    |
| 1256.                                    |   | Gilbert II.                               |           |
| 1267. Magnus III.                        |   | Magnus III.                               | 172. —    |
| 1274. Magnus IV.                         |   | Magnus IV.                                | 172. —    |
| 1284. Jon.                               |   | John.                                     | 172. —    |
| 1305. Magnus V.                          |   | Magnus V.                                 |           |
|                                          |   | Malis Cômes de<br>Stratherne.             |           |

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## APPENDIX, No. V.

TABLE of the Ancient COUNTS of ORKNEY, according to the Genealogical Series above stated, also of the Line of these COUNTS down to this Day. A Succession so long continued, and so well vouched, that no Family in any Nation can boast of the like; Having for its Foundation these concurring Authorities; first, those followed by the Little Parliament of this Country, in their Genealogical Series before mentioned; secondly, those followed in the Orkades of TORFÆUS, and Orkneyinga Saga; and lastly, the Authority of that great Antiquary, Sir JAMES BALFOUR, King at Arms, in his Catalogue of the Scots Nobility.

1. PRINCE Rognald the Stout, father of Rollo Duke of Normandy.
2. Sigurdus, or Swardus, brother of Rognald.
3. Gothormus, son of Swardus.
4. Einar, brother of Rollo D. of Normandy.
5. Thurvider,



5. Thurvider, son of Einar.
  6. Laudver, son of Thurvider.
  7. Sigurdus II., surnamed the Gross, son of Laudver.
  8. Thurfin, son of Sigurdus.
  9. Erlin, son of Thurfin.
- Paul and Erlin II., sons of Erlin I.  
Haco, son of Paul, and Magnus I., afterwards St.  
Magnus, son of Erlin II.  
Rognald II., or St Rognald, nephew of St Magnus.  
Eric, brother of St Rognald.  
Harald, Earl of Athole, grandson of Paul.  
John, son of Harald.  
Magnus II., heir at law to John.  
Gilbert I., heir at law to Magnus II.  
Gilbert II., son of Gilbert I.  
Magnus III., son of Gilbert II.  
Magnus IV., son of Magnus III.  
John II., brother of Magnus IV.  
Magnus V., son of John.  
Malifius Earl of Stratherne, grandson of Gilbert II.  
William Lord Sinclair, son-in-law of Malifius.  
Henry I., son of William.
- |                                                                     |   |   |       |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|-------|
| Henry II. (son of Henry I.) died                                    | - | - | 1420. |
| William II. (son of Henry II.) under whom these Islands first pass- |   |   |       |
| ed to the Scots                                                     | - | - | 1479. |
- The line of these ancient counts continued.
- |                                                                |   |   |       |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|-------|
| William III. Lord Sinclair, commonly William the Waster, first |   |   |       |
| son of William II.                                             | - | - | 1487. |
| Henry III. L. Sinclair, son of W. the Waster                   | - | - | 1513. |
| William IV. L. Sinclair, son of Henry III.                     | - | - | 1570. |
| Lord Henry IV., son of William IV.                             | - | - | 1603. |
| James, Master of Sinclair, son of Henry IV.                    | - | - | 1593. |
| Patrick Lord Sinclair, son of James                            | - | - | 1619  |
| John Lord Sinclair, son of Patrick                             | - | - | 1667. |
- 3 I 2
- John



John II. of Kerminston, son-in-law of John I.

Henry V. Lord Sinclair, son of John II. 1725.

John III. the present Lord Sinclair, son of Henry the 5th.—The late

Mr James Mackenzie's MS. notes on Wallace, *penes me.*

## APPENDIX, No. VI.

EXEMPLUM CONTRACTUS MATRIMONIALIS *inter Serenissimum*  
*Scotiæ Regem* JACOBUM *Tertium et Serenissimam Principem* MARGARE-  
THAM *Potentissimi Principis* CHRISTIANI *Primi Daniæ Norvegiæ et*  
*Sveciæ Regis Filiam.* E TORFÆI *Hist. extractum.*

CHRISTIERNUS Dei gratia Daciæ, Sueciæ, Norvegiæ Slavorum Gotho-  
rumque Rex, Dux Slesvicensis, et Comes Holsatiæ, Stormariæ, Oldenburgh,  
Delmenhurst, universis Christi fidelibus præsentis literas inspecturis, Salutem,  
ac votivæ prosperitatis augmentum. Notum fieri volumus per præsentis,  
quod reverendi in Christo Patres et Domini, Domini Andreas et Wilhelmus  
Glasguen. et Orcaden. Ecclesiarum Episcopi, Nobiles ac Magnifici Domini,  
Andreas Dominus a Vandale Regni Scotiæ Cancellarius, Thomas Comes de  
Arane, Magistri Martinus Wan, Magnus Eleemosinarius et Regis Scotiæ  
Confessor. Gilbertus de Rerich Archidiaconus Glasguen. David Crechton  
de Cranston, et Johannes Schau de Haly.

Inclyti Oratores, Nuncii et Ambaxiatores Excellentissimi Principis Jacobi  
Dei gratia Scotorum Regis Illustrissimi, fratris confæderati et Consanguinei  
nostri Charissimi, se cum literis credentiarum Regalibus, nobis apud oppidum  
nostrum Hafnen. Roschilden. Dioce, nuper præsentarunt, in vim credentiæ  
earundem oretenus exponentes. Quod Serenissimus Scotorum Rex præfa-  
tus, gravissima præliorum discrimina, hominum strages, et exitia, rabie guer-  
rarum sevissima, inter Norvegiæ et Scotiæ Reges ac regna olim commissa  
penitus extinguere, ac regnum præfatorum hæredum, successorum, et utri-  
usque



usque regni procerum animos in perpetuæ pacis, confœderationis et amicitiae unione æternaliter copulare peroptavit, prout et nos etiam ferventi animo affectamus. Id tamen aptius fieri non prospexit quam ut nova saboles, ex utriusque principis sanguine matrimonialiter suscitata contrahatur.

Videntesque præfati oratores apud nos inclytissimam virginem Margaretham, filiam nostram unigenitam et legitimam ætate nubilem, præclaræque speciositatis forma decoratam, præfato Excellentissimo Principi Jacobo Scotorum Regi Serenissimo aptam, habilem, et, ut asseruerunt, congruentem, eamque in futuram conjugem et inclytissimam eorum principis consortem petierunt ac nos operosæ sollicitudinis studio desuper sollicitarunt.

Nos vero ac dilecti Consules nostri ex una cum præfatis oratoribus super hac re partibus, ex altera tractatus varios, communicationes ac prælocutiones plurimas habentes, tandem gratis animis modo formaque sequentibus, concordatim extitit et conclusam. Et primo dicti Oratores Nuncii et Ambaxiatores Excellentissimi Principis Jacobi Scotorum Regis memorati visionem ac inspectionem inclytissimæ virginis Margarethæ filiæ nostræ unigenitæ habentes, eamque nomine, vice et ex parte præfati Principis in futuram conjugem et reginam effectuose ut præfertur adoptantes. Quorum nos votis desideriiisque gratanter annuentes dictam Margaretham filiam nostram ac unigenitam præfato Principi Jacobo Scotorum Regi Serenissimo in futuram conjugem concessimus donavimus ac tradidimus. Quam præfati Oratores Zelanti animo virtute commissionis ab eorum Principe Jacobo Scotorum Rege ipsis in hac parte specialiter commissæ acceptarunt benigne, cujus commissionis tenor sequitur in hæc verba.

Jacobus Dei gratia Rex Scotorum, universis et singulis, ad quorum notitias præsentis literæ pervenerint, salutem. Cum Deus æternus, qui machinam mundi creavit, omniaque ac cuncta ipsius ambitu contenta, potenter regit et gubernat, in mundi nascentis exordio suæ ostendens Divinæ Majestatis clementiam, matrimonii sacramentum inter nostros primos progenitores ad humani generis propagationem et perpetuam ipsius durabilitatem, ut nova sobole mortuam renovaret, instituit, per quod etiam alium matrimonii sacramentum divina peragente gratia regnant Reges felici successioni, et inclyta principes virtute dominantur. Ex quo etiam matrimonio et ejus fœdere sacro, hostilitates et inimicitiae, ac alia enormia quam plurima unitatis

et



et animorum conjunctione pelluntur, amor, dilectio, et amicitia, pax tranquillitas et caritas radican-  
tutur, multæque et innumerabiles aliæ felicitates et bona sequuntur.

Nos igitur præhabita deliberacione matura nostri consilii magni, hominum more, conjugali vinculo vivere volentes confisi de prudentia, circumspectione, fide, et legalitate Reverendorum in Christo Patrum Andreae et Wilhelmi Glasguen. et Orchaden. Episcoporum, Nobilium, Dominorum, Andreae, Domini a Vandale, Cancellarii nostri, Thomæ, Comitis de Aran, Con sanguineorum et Consulum nostrorum; nec non discretorum Clericorum, Magistrorum, Martini Wau, Magni Elemosinarii et Confessoris nostri.

Gilberti de Rerich, Archidiaconi Glasguen. David Crechton de Cranston, et Johannis Schau de Haly nostrorum armigerorum, ipsos nostros Ambaxiatores Commissarios et Oratores speciales facimus, constituimus, et ordinamus, per præsentem, dantes et concedentes eisdem et eorum, septem, sex, quinque, quatuor et tribus eorundem, dummodo dictus Reverendus Pater Episcopus Glasguen. Andreas dominus a Vandale Cancellarius noster, et Thomas Comes de Aran, aut eorum duo de tribus existant, nostram plenam potestatem et mandatum speciale, imperium, regna, Franciæ, Angliæ, Hispaniæ, Daciæ, Ducatus et Dominia Burgundiæ, Britanniæ, Sabandiæ et adjacentes alias provincias, ubi opportunum eis visum fuerit visitandi, perlustrandi et peragrandi, atque imperio, regnis et ducatibus supradictis et adjacentibus provinciis laborandi et inquirendi, ubi nobis posset de futura conjugee, persona nobili, de dictis domibus nobis apta et congrua, provideri et avisari cum eadem et suis inclutissimis parentibus modis quibus validius fieri poterit super matrimonio inter nos et eandem contrahendo, communicando, appunctuandi, tractandi, concludendi, super dote et donatione propter nuptias conveniendi, tractatus desuper et quascunque conventiones et passionem agendi, gerendi, paciscendi, dotem pro ipsa conjugee nostra constituendi, postulandi, et nostro nomine constitutionem recipiendi, et acceptandi, ac dotalitium, seu propter nuptias donationem, ut nostræ serenissimæ consorti sive conjugee convenit, constituendi, assignandi, et promittandi, ipsosque contractus et conventiones quibuscunque licitis securitatibus, ne contraventionis detur occasio, vallandi, firmandi, et roborandi, ac etiam super perpetuis amicitiarum et auxiliorum vinctis, fœderibus et confœderationibus inter nos, hæredes et successores



ſucceſſores noſtros, ex una, et illuſtriſſimam domum illam, ex qua noſtram ſereniſſimam conſortem ſive conjugem eligi contigerit, hæredes et ſucceſſores domus ejusdem partibus ex altera paciſcendi, tractandi, appunctuandi, concordandi, et concludendi, pacta, tractatus, appunctuamenta, concordantias et conſuſiones firmandi et roborandi.

Et generaliter omnia alia et ſingula faciendi, generandi, communicandi, tractandi, concludendi, et ſtabiliendi, quæ in præmiſſis neceſſaria, ſeu etiam opportuna fuerint, etiam ſi mandatum exigatur magis ſpeciale, quam præſentibus literis eſt expreſſum.

Promittentes præterea pro nobis, hæredibus et ſucceſſoribus noſtris in verbo regio, nos ratum, gratum, firmum, validum et ſtabile pro perpetuo habituros, totum et quicquid per dictos noſtros ambaxiatores, oratores, et commiſſarios ſeptem, ſex, quinque, quatuor, aut tres eorundem, dummodo dictus reverendus Pater Episcopuſ Glaſguen. Andreas Dominuſ a Wandale Cancellariuſ noſter, et Thomas Comes de Aran, aut eorum duo de tribus exiſtant, actum, factum, communicatum, traditum, conventum, pactum, concluſumque fuerit, ſeu quomodolibet geſtum aut ſtabilitum in præmiſſis, aut aliquo præmiſſorum. Datum ſub noſtro magno ſigillo apud caſtrum noſtrum de Edinburgh, viceſimo octavo die menſis Iulii, anno Domini milleſimo quadringenteſimo ſexageſimo octavo, et regni noſtri octavo.

Succeſſive vero illuſtres, nobileſque Domini Andreas Dominuſ a Wandale, regni Scociæ Cancellariuſ et Thomas Comes de Aran, procuratores memorati Sereniſſimi Principiſ Jacobi Scotorum Regiſ Illuſtriſſimi ad hæc ſpecialiter per eundem conſtituti, ſponſalia, primo per verba de futura vice, nomine et ex parte præfati Principiſ Jacobi Scotorum Regiſ Illuſtriſſimi, cum Margaretha filia noſtra inclytiſſima, juxta ritum et eccleſiæ conſuetudinem contraxerunt. Deinde vero ſpecialiſ procuratorii virtute dictam Margaretham, per verba de preſenti, juxta Patrum ſanctiones, matrimonialiter copularunt, in animamque præfati Principiſ conſtituentes, ſolemniterque jurantes quod præfatuſ Sereniſſimuſ Princepſ Jacobuſ Scotorum Rex impedimentum ſeu impedimenta nunquam præſtitit quo minus ſponſalia et matrimonium, cum præfata noſtra unigenita contracta, debitum non fortiatur effectum, cujuſ præactæ ſpecialiſ commiſſionis tenor ſequitur in hunc modum.

Jacobuſ



Jacobus Dei gratia Rex Scotorum, universis et singulis, ad quorum notitias presentes literæ pervenerint.

Salutem, Sciatis nos ex nostra mera et spontanea voluntate fecisse, constituisse et ordinasse, ac per præsentis facere, constituere et ordinare illustres et nobiles nostri magni consilii, Dominos, Andream, Dominum a Wandale Cancellarium nostrum, et Thomam Comitem de Aran, consanguineos nostros dilectos, et eorum quemlibet, in solidum, nostros veros legitimos et indubitatos ac irrevocabiles procuratores, actores, factores, et negotiorum nostrorum gestores et nuncios ad hoc generales et speciales, ita quod generalitas specialitate non deroget, nec e contra, et quod non sit melior conditio occupantis nec deterior subsequens, quoad infra scripta specialiter et eorum merita.

Dantes et concedentes dictis nostris procuratoribus ad hoc specialiter constitutis et eorum cuilibet in solidum, nostram plenariam potestatem, et mandatum speciale ad visitandum excellentissimum et potentissimum principem Christiernum Dei gratia Daciæ, Sveciæ, Norwegiæ, Slavorum, Gothorumque, Regem, &c.

Consanguineum nostrum charissimum, et ad contrahendum nomine nostro sponsalia per verba de futuro, et matrimonium per verba de præsentibus cum illustri et potenti Domina, Domina Margaretha filia unica dicti Illustrissimi Principis in ætate habili et viro matura, ad matrimonium contrahendum constituta.

Cui matrimonio per eosdem aut eorum alterum nostro nomine, ut præmittitur, contracto firmiter stabimus et non contra veniemus, durante vita nostra, et dictæ futuræ conjugis nostræ, ac etiam in animam nostram jurandi et firmiter promittendi, quod priori tempore nihil egimus, fecimus, aut diximus, quod futurum matrimonium inter nos, quovis pacto, de jure aut de facto poterit impedire aut contractum de jure dissolvere, nec in futurum faciemus, donec nobis de eorum factis circa præmissum matrimonium contrahendum constiterit luculenter aut ipsos nostros procuratores in solidum irrevocabiliter constitutos revocabimus, aut eisdem seu eorum alteri, alium seu alios adjungemus seu annectemus nec non omnia alia et singula faciendi, gerendi, et exercendi quæ in præmissis et circa ea necessaria fuerint, seu quomodolibet opportuna, etiam si talia sint, quæ mandatum exigunt



gunt magis speciale, et qua nos faceremus, si in præmissis personaliter interessemus.

Promittentes insuper in verbo regis nos ratum, gratum, firmum et stabile, habituros totum et quicquid per dictos nostros procuratores in solidum, actum, factum, gestumque fuerit, circa præmissum matrimonium seu quomodolibet procuratum, et nunquam contravenire in futurum.

Datum sub magno figillo nostro, apud Edinburg, vicesimo octavo die mensis Julii, anno Domini millesimo quadringentesimo sexagesimo octavo, et regni nostri octavo.

Nos Christiernus Daciæ, Sueciæ, Norvegiæ, &c. rex pro sacro matrimonii fœdere, ac præfatæ Margarethæ filiæ nostræ unigenitæ, dote, et ut amor, dilectio, pax, et amicitia animis regum firmitus adhæreant, uberiusque et efficacius inter reges et regna radiceantur, consensu pariter et assensu prælatorum, procerum ac regni nostri Norvegiæ nobilium prius habitis, commodo insuper ac utriusque regni utilitate diligenter inspectis, in partem dotis cum Margaretha filia nostra unigenita, memorato principi Jacobo Scotorum Regi excellentissimo ac Margarethæ filiæ nostræ ipsius regis sponsæ, eorumque hæredibus, ac liberis duntaxat annuam pensionem centum marcarum Stirlingorum nobis et hæredibus nostris Norvegiæ regibus, pro tempore existentibus, ratione insularum Sodorensium et Maniæ, annis singulis debitam concedimus, tradimus et tenore præsentium donamus.

Omnes insuper et singulis pertinentiarum summas, damna, deprædationes, et injurias ratione pensionis præfatæ et occasione contractum inter prædecessores nostros, olim Norvegiæ et Scotiæ reges initorum debitas, penitus remittentes, ac universis et singulis contractibus, evidentiis, literis, et munimentis desuper factis, solemniter renunciamus, ac si de verbo in verbum de ipsis contractibus, obligationibus, evidentiis literis, et munimentis specialis et expressa præsentis mentio facta fuisset.

Promittimus etiam ac pollicemur pro nobis hæredibus ac successoribus nostris Norvegiæ Regibus, contra donationem, concessionem, traditionem aut renuncionem, prædictas, non venire, nec venire facere, seu fieri permittere directe vel indirecte, quovis quæsito ingenio vel colore, renunciando præterea omni, quo ad hoc actioni, exceptioni, relevamini, seu remedio juris canonici aut civilis.



In complimentum insuper totius dotis promittimus pollicemur, et obligamus nos, hæredes et successores nostros, præfato excellentissimo principi Jacobo Scotorum regi serenissimo, suisve procuratoribus in summam sexaginta millium florenorum Rhenensium fideliter persolvendam, de qua quidem summa præfatis procuratoribus decem millia florenorum prædictorum ante eorum ad regnum Scotiæ de regno nostro Daciæ recessum integraliter fideliterque persolvemus et de eadem pecunia numerata satisfaciemus expedite cum effectu.

Pro summa vero quinquaginta millium florenorum restante, de summa integrali prædicta, nos Christiernus Norvegiæ Rex de consensu et assensu prælatorum, procerum ac majorum regni Norvegiæ prædictæ nobilium, damus, concedimus, impignoramus, ac sub firma hypotheca et pignore imponimus atque hypothecamus omnes et singulas terras nostras insularum Orcadensium, cum omnibus et singulis juribus, serviciis, ac justis suis pertinentiis, nobis regali jure, et prædecessoribus nostris Norvegiæ Regibus, spectantibus, seu quovismodo spectare valentibus, tenendas et habendas totas et integras terras nostras insularum Orcadensium prædictarum, una cum omnibus et singulis customis, proficuis, libertatibus, commoditatibus ac aliis justis suis pertinentiis, quibuscunque, tam nominatis quam innominatis, ad prædictas terras Orchadiæ spectantibus, seu juste spectare valentibus, quomodolibet in futurum sæpe dicto excellentissimo principi Jacobo Scotorum regi filio et confæderato nostro charissimo in partem dotis cum filia nostra Margaretha prædicta donec et quousque, per nos, hæredes nostros vel successores Norvegiæ reges, præfato Jacobo Scotorum regi, hæredibus seu successoribus suis de summa quinquaginta millium florenorum Rhenensium restantium de parte dotis, dicto Jacobo Scotorum regi cum Margaretha filia nostra antedicta, donatæ, concessæ, et assignatæ, fuerit integraliter et plenarie satisfactum ac persolutum cum effectu. Et nos hæredes nostri, ac successores regni Norvegiæ Reges, præfatas terras Orcaden. sic, ut præmittitur, hypothecas, et memorato Jacobo Scotorum regi suisque successoribus Scotiæ regibus impignoratas, contra omnes mortales warantizabimus, et in perpetuum defendimus.

Præterea Oratores, Nuncii et Ambaxiatores præfati, nomine, vice et ex parte eorundem principis ac commissionis prædictæ vigore ipsis ab eodem



rege commissæ, pro dotalicio seu donatione propter nuptias præfatæ Margarethæ filiæ nostræ unigenitæ Jacobi Scotorum regis sponsæ et reginæ, assignaverunt, dederunt et concesserunt palatium de Linlithus, et castrum de Dova in Mentech, cum omnibus suis pertinentiis et adjacentibus, ac cum illis tertiam partem proprietatis Regni Scociæ et omnium proventuum, reddituum ac obventuum ejusdem proprietatis præfato serenissimo principi Jacobo Scotorum Regi, seu ad proprietatem regni sui pertinentium. Et si contingat insuper, præfatum Dominum Jacobum Scotorum regem ante mortem dictæ Margarethæ suæ conjugis, diem, (quod absit) claudere extremum, præfata Domina Margaretha, infra tres annos obitum ipsius immediate sequentes, liberam facultatem regnum Scociæ exeundi, seu infra idem commorandi, habebit prout præfatæ Margarethæ melius aut complacentius expedire videbitur.

Et si regnum Scociæ exire præligerit, nos oratores præfati, promittimus, pollicemur ac obligamus excellentissimum principem nostrum Jacobum Scotorum Regem, suosque hæredes et successores in summam centum et viginti millium florenorum Rhenensium, dictæ Domine Margarethæ fideliter solvendorum, pro tertia parte proprietatis regni Scociæ sibi in dotalitio, seu donatione, ut præmittitur, assignata, de qua vero summa, centum et viginti millium florenorum, defalcabitur summæ dotis Jacobo Scotorum regi assignatæ et nondum solutæ, scilicet, summa quinquaginta millium florenorum, et terræ insularum Orchaden. Regi nostro Jacobo impignoratæ, ad Norvegiæ Reges revertentur, contradictione, fraude, dolo et machinatione, malis exclusis penitus et semotis.

Dum tamen præfata Domina Margaretha, cum Rege Angliæ seu quacunque altera persona, gentis sive regni ejusdem matrimonialiter non copuletur aut quovis modo conjugatur.

Cæterum ad uberiores animorum Norvegiæ et Scociæ Regum unionem, amorum dilectionis et amicitie conjunctionem, pacis, tranquillitatis ac charitatis continuationem.

Nos Christiernus Norvegiæ Rex, et nos oratores ac procuratores excellentissimi principis Jacobi Scotorum Regis ad hoc potestatem habentes, in efficacioris, confæderationis vinculo approximare cupientes, pro nobis, hæredibus ac successoribus nostris ac regnorum nostrorum proceribus, mutuam



amicitiam ac nova foedera inviolabiliter observanda et alternatis vicibus ad alterius principis requisitionem, opem, subventionem et auxilium, contra quemcunque, seu quoscunque principem seu principes gentemve, populum, confœratis nostris, ante datam præsentium duntaxat exceptis fideliter præstare, ac præsentium tenore firmiter observare, nos ad hoc hæredes nostros et successores astringentes in verbo regio inviolabiliter obligamus.

Si vero partium aliquam præfatarum excellentissimum Jacobum Scotorum principem serenissimum aut Margaretham filiam nostram inclytissimam ante nuptias, inter eos celebratas, seu carnalem copulam subsequutam mori contigerit, universa et singula præmissa, tractata, appunctuata, conclusa pro dotibus et donationibus propter nuptias ex utraque parte penitus et omnino sint extincta.

Quæ præmissa omnia et singula nos Christiernus Daciæ et Norvegiæ Rex; Quatenus nos concernunt, bona fide, verboque regio, pro nobis hæredibus et successoribus nostris adimplere promittimus. Et ad hoc nos hæredesque nostros et successores Daciæ ac Norvegiæ Reges obligamus et hypothecamus, ac per præsentem obligamus et hypothecamus.

Et nos oratores præfati, vice ac procuratorio nomine principis nostri Jacobi Scotorum regis illustrissimi præmissa omnia et singula prout nos concernunt, nomine procuratorio et vigore commissionum superius insertarum bona fide adimplere promittimus, et adimpleri procurare, nec contra ea quavis occasione in futurum devenire excellentissimum principem nostrum Jacobum Scotorum Regem, hæredes et successores suos ad hoc firmiter obligantes et expresse hypothecantes.

In quorum omnium et singulorum fidem, et testimonium præmissorum nos Christiernus Daciæ ac Norvegiæ rex præfatus sigillum nostrum et nos oratores antedicti sigilla nostra, duplici sub forma præsentibus apponi fecimus, apud oppidum Hafnen, infra regnum Daciæ, octavo die mensis Septembris, anno Domini millesimo quadringentesimo sexagesimo octavo, indictione prima pontificatusque sanctissimi in Christo patris et Domini nostri, Domini Pauli divina providentia Papæ secundi anno quarto.



## APPENDIX, No. VII.

## DESCRIPTIO INSULARUM ORCHADIARUM,

*per me JO. BEN, ibidem Colentem, in Anno 1529.*

## NORTH RONALDSAY I.

PRIMA insula est North Ronaldsay, ab aquilone, et est terra equata mari, et naufragium Anglis et aliis navigantibus sæpissime præbet: distat enim a Kirkwallia 60 miliaribus, in circuitu 4. Populi fiunt admodum ignari divini eloquii, quia raro aut nunquam docentur. Fertilitas magna illic frumenti, nempe hordei atque avenarum homines hyeme vescuntur pane hordeaceo, æstate vero pisciculis parvis atque lacte, in ea parte insulæ nempe aquilone belluæ maximæ vernaculæ (selchis) retis factis ex cannabe capiuntur; et distat a terra scopulus magnus dimidium milliare nomine (Selch-skerry) ubi marinæ aves illic colunt et nidificant.

In illo scopulo belluæ prædictæ fluctuante mari ad cacumen ascendunt, abeunte vero in puteum decidunt ubi vi nulla egredi possunt, exitus nullus est: mutuo inter sese murmurantes agricolæ moris venientibus ad scopulum accedunt corylis magnis; belluæ vero intuentes atque frendentes ira cum magna apertura oris flecti viam tendunt, tunc agrediuntur viribus, et voluntarie pugnam vexerint. Belluæ, etsi prima sine læsione evaserit omnes aliæ dentibus in homines incidunt; quod autem si prima cæsa et mortua fuerit omnes aliæ in fugam eunt atque facile capiuntur, et captas vidi semel 60.

Carent igne, nisi algis marinis siccis, cespites vero aranaceos habent minime in igne lucentes, luce vero qua hyeme fruuntur ex intestinis piscium est, vel ex abdomine: et ex stercorebus pecorum in muro sparsis et sole arefactis optimus focus est: nec ranæ, glires, nec bufones hic colunt; et si navis hic adduxerit glires cito pereunt quasi veneno.

SANDAY



## SANDAY 2.

Sanday (sic dicta quasi insula arenosa, the Sanday Isle, quia est arenarum plena) distat a prædicta insula duo milliaria maxima: insula illa est in longitudine duodecim milliaria, latitudine vero duo. Angli et Germani sæpissime hic pereunt in una parte versus orientem, nomine the Star of Lopeness.

Ipse ego transiens per insulam, atque fatigatus, me apud unam recepi nomine Sancti Crucis, et in cemeterio innumerabilia capita hominum circiter mille vidi majora tribus capitibus nunc viventibus; et dentes aliquos ex gingivis extraxi similitudine unius glandis avellanæ. Mirabar quidem atque cupidus rerum novarum me homini seni contuli investigansque quænam hæc erant et unde ossa semisepulta, respondit ille, Fili, hæc insula olim erat subjecta Stronsariis atque etiam annuatim redditum dedimus ut libere efficeremur, quatenus imbelles fuimus; cum itaque redditu admodum fatigati adolevimus consilium cepimus quomodo exonerari potuimus.

Tunc unus prudentior aliis dixit: Dies ecce solutionis adest; apud ecclesiam nosmet ipsos abscondemus, in cuniculis trucidabimus omnes ad unum ita ut nullus eorum evadet: omnes illi annuerunt. Veniente vero die, Stronsarii cum uxoribus, filiis, filiabus, famulis, familiaribus cæterisque multis solventes anchora, velis extensis, atque aura secunda, sine armis elati gaudio, ad littus nostrum appulerunt ubi saltantes et ducentes choreas majorem partem diei consumpserunt. Interea Sandesii et nos hic colentes commoti atque armis aptissimis succincti subito clamore et sono terribili orto eos invasimus et, omnes ad mortem trucidavimus et quidem nullus hic unquam postea tributum solvimus et sic liberati fuimus. Hæ duæ insulæ atque omnes luridissimi sunt.

Tam senes quam juvenes in his duobus insulis ita pediculosi sunt, ut nulla arte mederi possunt. Cuniculi hic æstate abundanter sunt, hyeme vero adeo sunt domabiles ut in domibus capiuntur singulorum. Homines hic Laici habent Calceos ex belluorum pellibus ligulo contractos vernacule *Riffings* vocatos.



## STRONSAY 3.

Stronsay, vel Sdronsay, sic dicta quasi the Streams Isle. Ista insula in longitudine est sex milliaria, quatuor vero in latitudine; glæbæ hic abundantes sunt ac dimidia pars hic inculta est. Zuidam hic deum pure colunt alii non. Maxime etiam fidunt napeis (the ferries), et dicunt homines subito morientes vitam postea cum illis degere, quanquam ego non credo.

Monstri maximi nomine Troicis sæpissime coeunt cum mulieribus illic colentibus, quod cum ego illic colui, mulier illic erat formosa maritata colono forti; ipsa vexabatur spiritu maximo, invito marito, concubantibus in uno thoro, et naturaliter concubuit cum muliere, et videbatur. Mulier tandem macera facta est præ dolore: Hortatus sum ut vacaret precatione elemosyna et jejunio quod et fecit; durante anno ficcine turbata est. Descriptio istius monstri hæc est.

Indutus est algis marinis, toto corpore, similis est pullo equino convolutopilis, membrum habet simile equino et testiculos magnos.

## PAPA STRONSAY 4.

Et distat ab ista insulia alia, quæ vocatur Papa Stronsay, quæ parva omnino est, et agricola est unus ille colens, et in medio lacus est incolumis valde. Etymologia (the Little Stronsay.) Altera jactu lapidis.

## AUSKERRIE 5.

Est alia insula inculta, nomine Auskerrie, ubi equi ferocissimi sunt.

## SHAPINSHAY



## SHAPINSHAY 6.

Shapinshaw dicta (the Shipping Isle) populi colentes hanc insulam maxime sunt ignari, colunt napeis et alia nefaria: In longitudine est sex milliaria, in latitudine duo; illic currunt cætera maria ubi patet ingressus ad Kirkwalliam.

## ELOERHOLME 7.

Eloerholme insula nunc inculta, sed bases domorum et Striga illic apparent, atque etiam facellum: causæ vastationis atque desolationis hæc sunt. Duo fratres hic colebant, unus cultor veritatis, alter minime divinus; orta contentione inter fratres, hic impius Episcopo enunciavit fratrem suum sponte cum affini concubuisse: audita querula, Episcopus felle commotus, utrumque expulit decedentibus uxoribus, flexis genibus insulam devovebant quamobrem nullus adhuc diem coluit.

## WESTRAY 8.

Westray quasi dicas occidentalis insula (the West Isle) omnium insularum Orchadiensium fertilissima est, atque illic genera nobilium colunt, et est excellentissima arx sive castellum, sed nondum tamen adhuc completa.

Olim agricolæ hic habitantes pugnam ineuntes cum hybernibus, vernacule (the Lewismen), versique in fugam omnes simul perire: Unus tamen diu pugnabat prestantior atque robustior aliis interfectis, cæsis tamen poplitibus, ad genua coactus est dum in certamine fuerit.

In hac insula unus est sublimis mons.



## PAPA WESTRAY 9.

Papa Westray, quasi dicas (the Little West Isle) subjecta est priori insulæ, fertilis ut aliæ insulæ, lacus est in hujus insula meditullio et in lacu insula in qua capella parvula est.

## FARAY 10.

Faray, quasi dicas pulchra insula (the Pleasant Isle). Hæc insula est maxime commoda bestiis precipue vaccis, quæ illic magna melodia tondant dumeta: Et pueri hic cantant brutis. Tota insula est frumenti et piscium plena.

## EDAY 11.

Eday insula olim erat omnium insularum aquilonarium ditissima, et circiter triginta coloni illic habitabant, sed expulsi adveniente vastatore ut vix unus illic nunc est. Abundantia illic magna omnium precipue pecorum. Viri sæpissimæ pugnant cum monstris maximis, atque hora peracta dissolvunt in fece et coquunt in oleo. In ambitu hæc insula continet decem milliaria.

## EGILSCHAY 12.

Egilschay, quasi dicas ecclesiæ insularum (the Kirk-Isle). In longitudine est unum milliare, latitudine autem dimidium; ecclesia hic est Sancto Magno dicata. Quamplurimi insulam hanc pretereuntes vitalia lumina perdunt. Gallinæ hic quamplurima ova deponunt ita ut doliantur foro. Sanctus Magnus in hac insula natus est, et educatus est ab infantia, et dedit domum nutrici suæ, nempe messuagium unum terræ, ubi illa facellum ædificavit, in



quo cameram in solo fecit, atque cunabulum, mensam, lectum, et alia domui necessaria ex lapidibus, postea vero dirutum, ubi segetes nunc sunt nihilominus supellectilia adhuc manent.

### ROUSAY 13.

Rowsay, quasi dicas Raulandi Insula, magna insula est, et maxima ejus pars inculta. In ambitu hæc insula continet octo milliaria, montes habet excelsos, et sæpissime igne incensos videntur, sine hominibus, nocte, quod quidem mirabile est.

### WEIR 14.

Weir, insula est parva Petro Apostolo dicata. Cæteris insulis obumbrata, ut vix videri potest, habitata colonis. Hic olim gigas habitabat procerus, ubi effigies domus adhuc manet. Alii dicunt quod hæc insula facta est ex cymba Sancti Magni dum fugeret ad insulam de Aglishay.

### ENHALLOW 15.

Enhallow, quasi dicas Sancta Insula, et minima; fabulantur hic antiqui quod, si metantur segetes, post solis occasum, subito manat cruor de calamis frumentorum; alii dicunt si equus ligatus fuerit sole decidente facile vagatur undique per noctem sine alicujus  
 si vero non  
 cernere hic posses eorum fictitias et fabulosas  
 traditiones.

### GAIRRAY 16.

Gairfay insula habet tres holmas, et in monticulum in medio surgit: Agricolaë hanc insulam colunt ad marinum littus, sed minorem partem.

### DAMSAY



## DAMSAY 17.

Damsay Infula, nullus tumulus hic est, sed placidissima est omnium atque Tempe vocatur: Ecclesia est in hac infula dedicata Mariæ Virgini ad quam plerumque mulieres progrediuntur grandes. Nunquam ranæ, bufones, nec alia terrestria mala hic sunt; mulieres hic steriles sunt, et si gravidæ evenerint, nunquam cum vita pariunt. Fabulantur quod aliquando supercilia auferuntur inter spatium unius horæ, deinde vero restituuntur. Distat hac infula à Kirkwallia duo milliaria.

## POMONIA.

Pomonia Infula, aliter (the Mainland), sic dicta quasi (the Middle of the Apple, because it lies betwixt the North and South Isles): Hæc infula continet multas parochias, quarum hæc est prima.

## DIERNES.

Diernes quasi (the Nefs of Diers) hæc parochia olim erat næmorosa; et multæ feræ hic fuere; tandem diluviis venientibus, arbores, vulsis radicibus, submersi sunt.

In aquilonari parte istius parochiæ in mari est nativum Saxum ubi homines manibus et genibus quam difficillime ascendunt ad cacumen; illic est facellum quod nominatur (the Bairns of Burgh.)

Confluunt huc ex diversis insulis, homines, juvenes, pueri, senes, servi innumerabiles, venti vero, nudis pedibus, ut prius dixi, orantes ascendunt ubi nullus preterquam unus ad facellum uno tempore venire potest: Illic est fons purus et nitidissimus; quod quidem mirabile est: Tunc homines, genibus flexis, manibusque conjunctis, diffidentes Deum esse, orant (the bairns of Brugh) multis incantationibus, projicientes lapides et aquam post tergora, et circa facellum bis terve gradientes, finita oratione domum redeunt affirmantes se vota habuisse. Non pure hic colunt Deum.



In anno 1506, Joannes Stewart Donnensis et Tartensis in aquilone appulit ad Orchadium, invenitque aurifodinam in hac parochia; tandem cum impleviffet duas naves et faburram aliis paraffet, et cum operariis in aurifodio efflet, cornix alta voce exclamata est ter; Egrefsi vero magifter cum quibusdam aliis, fed ibi quinque relictis corruiat faxum, et fuffocati hi quinque, falvis cæteris omnibus.

#### SANCTI ANDRÆ.

Secunda parochia dicitur Sancti Andræ. Hæc parochia eft magna, et frumenti ferax. Aliquid memorabile non hic eft nifi quod occidit uno viro nobiliffimo nomine Jacobo Sinclero, qui hic habitabat, et quondam bellum cum Cathanenfibz (de quo fuo loco dicetur) iniit, ifte nobilis dux captus eft, demens evafit; et feipfum in mare precipitavit ubi vitam finiit, quod quidem lamentabile eft.

#### HOLM ET PAPLAY.

Holm et Paplay duæ parochiæ funt conjunctim ubi de duabus una ecclefia eft. Transfretantur hic homines profecturi ad australes partes.

#### SANCTI OLAI.

Sancti Olai parochia eft floridiffima et amœniffima; in medio flat civitas excellentiffima nomine Kirkwallia, ubi ecclefia eft dicata Sancto Magno quæ habet et retinet in tantum ut laberintho fimilari poteft fedes Epifcopalis in civitate hic eft, (No the Yards.) Castellum quondam fabricatum à Sincleris hic eft: Eft etiam hic alia ecclefia, in cineres redacta ab Anglis, nomine St Olais Kirk, ubi nunc fepeliuntur malefactores.



Deditæ sunt hic mulieres luxuriæ, sic puto propter piscium abundantiam. Hic undique in duabus partibus civitas est supposita aquis marinis. Hic mons est ingentissimus ubi tota Pomonia et omnes insulæ aspiciuntur nomine Whisford, et est judicium belli Orchardibus, cum fons in cacumine videtur scaturire.

Orchades bellum gerebant cum Anglis apud civitatem Lotus quidam vocant Paipdeliæ in anno 1502<sup>do</sup>, 13<sup>to</sup> Augusti, in quo bello Angli sunt prostrati et cæsi multique submersi, cum eorum duce, D<sup>o</sup>. Joanne Elder milite; Edwardo Sinclero tunc Orchadiensium duce.

## FIRTH.

Firth alia est parochia, ubi ostrea abunde capiuntur.

## STENHOUSE.

Stenhouse alia parochia est, ubi lacus magnus in circuitu 24 milliaria: Illic in monticulo prope lacum in sepulchro inventa sunt ossa unius viri, quæ quidem conjuncta fuere, et in longitudine erant 14 pedibus, ut author aiebat, et moneta illac inventa fuit sub capite illius mortui; et ego quidem sepulchrum vidi: Illic apud lacum lapides alti latique in altitudinis unius hastæ, in pari circuitu dimidii milliariis.

In anno 1527, bellum ortum est inter Cathenenfes et Orchades: Cathenenfes omni vi nitebantur invadere Orchades hastis, telis, sagittis et sonitibus tubarum. Pomonienses vero, dum hæc gerebantur, obviarunt illis atque in monte istius parochiæ apud Bexwell acies simul junxere. Cathenenfes omnes obversi fuerunt et interfecti, adeo ut ne quidem unus superfuit. Sepulchrum comitis in eo loco adhuc manet; is avus erat istius comitis nunc viventis. Orchades letitia commoti ob victoriam ad civitatem redierunt Jacobo Sinclero (de quo prius dictum) duce. Campus ubi hoc bellum pugnatum est vocatur Symmerdale.

## ORPHER.

Orpher alia parochia est, bonum portum piscatoribus præbens.

STROMNESS.



## STROMNESS.

Stromness alia parochia est, et portum habet salutiferum; classi hic exitus optimus: Galli Hispanique hic tempestates sapissime evitant: Hic nulli venti naves lædere possunt.

Vocatur portus hic Cairstane, quia Saxis munita est. Salubres venti hic flant, qui vocantur Etesia. Periculosissimus hic est pons viatoribus nominatus (the bridge of Vaith), ubi plurimi pereunt.

## SANDWICK.

Sandwick est alia parochia, fertilis valde et abundans cuniculis, maxima omnium parochiarum est, et tota culta.

## BIRSA.

Birsa baronia dicitur, ubi palatium est excellens, ubi olim regnabat Rex Orchadia; sed Julio Cæsare regnante totum orbem, vi quadam Romæ deferabatur, et subjecta est Orchadia Romanis postea, ut inscriptio unius lapidis testatur.

Nomen Regis fuit Gavus.

## HARA.

Hara alia parochia, ubi ignavissimi fuci sunt, ideoque dicuntur (the Sheeps of Harray). Hic est magna Ecclesia dedicata Sanctæ Mariæ, vulgus vocat (the Lady of Grace) de qua homines multa fabulantur: Hic multi confluunt ex diversis insulis.

## EVIE.

Evie alia parochia ubi cæte immunes ingrediuntur. Hic magna est frumentorum abundantia.

## RENDAL.



## RENDAL.

Rendal alia parochia: Ista parochia subjecta erat Domino Tulliallan et ipse erat Dominus ubi domus testatur adhuc.

Longitudo Pomoniæ (from the Bairns of Brugh to the Brugh of Birsay) continet sedecem milliaribus longissimis. Hic viri bellicosi sunt circiter quinque millia in Pomonia, et totidem in insulis. Abundantiam hordei et avenarum habet, omnes bibacissimi sunt hominum et luxuriosi, mutuo inter se præliantur: Exempli gratia, si vicinus vicinum invitaverit, si invitatus, antequam decesserit, non vomuerit, litibus magnis herum invadit, donec potus domum concesserit: Hic mos insularum etiam: Vafri sunt et subtilissimi: Utuntur idiomate proprio, veluti cum dicimus Guid day Guidman, illi dicunt goand da boundæ, &c.

## COPINSHAW 19.

Copinshaw parva Insula est, atque prima visa est navigantibus Orchadiæ. Unus hic colonus est. Saxum habet altissimum versus orientem; feræ volucres hic capiuntur in scopulo dimittendo puerum fune, sicine insideantur.

## SOUTH RONALDSAY 20.

South Ronaldsay alia Insula, ubi robustissimi homines habitant, habet templum juxta littus marinum, ubi lapis est durissimus, vulgus vocat (a gray whin), longitudine sex pedum, latitudine quatuor, in quo pressura duorum pedum nudorum infigitur, quam faber nullus quidem fabricari potest: fabulantur senes, quod Gallus quidam patria expulsus, locoque asyli, ingressus est navem quandam, ubi subita procella orta, periclitati, passique sunt naufragiam, ipse tandem transfiliens super tergum belluæ constitit suppliciter deum orans, quod si salvus portaretur ad terram, in memoriam &c. Mariæ Virginis ecclesiam construeret: Oratione audita, salvus ad littus appulit, adminiculo belluæ:



belluæ. Bellua tandem mutata in lapidem ejusdem coloris ipse in ecclesiam illam collocavit, ubi adhuc manet, ut supra dixi.

#### LAMBHOLME 21.

Lambholme parvissima insula est sterilis, et inculta, ubi multi cuniculi ab hominibus aliarum insularum occiduntur.

#### FLOTAY 22.

Flotay hæc insula est æquata mari et amœnissima. Vetus domus hic est diruta sola quam quidam ecclesiam, alii Presbyterium vocant, longitudine magna, ubi singulis annis comitia agebantur sacerdotum: Ternæ Trophæ hic erectæ sunt, quæ nos Crosses vocamus; aversa sunt fabro murario, somniantem vero fantasmata ea, nocte deinde vexabatur mirabilibus, vigilante vero minus affectus est et decumbebat lecto per spatium octo hebdomadam, ut author ipse fuit; fodiens vero postea tentorium invenit in tumulo, candelabra, zonas, et alia mirabilia quæ hoc loco recenseri non expedit.

#### CAVAY 23.

Cavay quasi (the Cheese Island) optimus caseus hic est: parvula est sed commodissima bestiis, absque arboribus, propter ventorum impetum hic flantium: Una domus hic est cum duobus tuguriis.

#### FARAY 24.

Faray, quasi clara insula (the Fare Isle) hujus nominis duæ sunt insulæ, alia est adjacens et vicina Zetlandiæ: Hæc insula sterilis est et inculta, sed piscatus nobilis.



## SOWNAY 25.

Sownay est insula fidam præbens stationem navibus peregrinis et piscatoribus. Avenæ et hordeum hic nascuntur. Sed terra est admodum arenosa. Non procul a Kirkness hic est Braga, a nautis bene nota.

## RYSSAY 26.

Ryssay est insula arenosa, sterilis et inculta. Hic olim erant optimæ glæbæ in tota Orcadia.

## BURRAY 27.

Burray, vulgo Burge Insula, est parva, sed hordei fructifera.

## WAIS 28.

Wais, Pomonienses vocant Incolas (the Lyars of Wais) insula est non magna. Nulla distinctio est inter Hoy et Wais, sed una insula est, recidente freto.

## HOY 29.

Hoy, ingentissimus mons hic est, distat enim a terra in pari altitudine tribus milliaribus, ubi ascensus non est; alter est mons non admodum adeo altus, inter quos lapis est admiratione dignus, magnus est et excelsus fabricatus a gigante suæque uxore: Unus lapis est cameratus, in quo lectus est perquam artificiose factus in lapide viro et uxore; tempore camerationis scœmina gravis fuit, ut lectus testatur; nam ea pars lecti in qua uxor cubuit effigiem habet ventri gravidi. In lapide pulvinar factum est duobus scuvialibus ex tumore lapidis, non tamen materia tenaci aliqua junguntur, sed unus est. Osteum habet obtrusum lapide: qui hoc fit, nescio. Fabulantur quod alter gigas in odium illum habebat quapropter lapidem fabricavit longitudine et



latitudine ostei ut eos includeret, et ita fame perirent, tandemque ipso dominante insulam, ad suum usum lapidem haberet et retineret. Detulit tandem lapidem fabricatam in summitatem montis atque jaculo imposito summa vi brachiorum (atque dolore alterius prosperitatis) in ostium injunxit, gigante incluso evigilante auribus lupum tenebat exire nequiens suis maleis impluvium fecit per quod egressus est. Si credere dignum, in hac insula, betulæ crescunt, et non in aliis; nam aliæ insulæ absque arboribus sunt: Albi lepores hic sunt, et capiuntur canibus. Abundantiam avium habet vernacule Lyris, piscium aliarumque volucrum.

Similiter hic sunt aurifodia, plumbifodia, ferrifodia, et quamplurima alia bona.

## GRAMSAY 30.

Gramsay est parva insula, sed culta; detrimentum magnum navibus.

## SOUTHAY 31.

Southay quasi (the South Isle) vel australis insula, nunc inculta est, sed olim fuit fertilissima armentorum. Omnes hic pariter vitam uno die finierunt, fabula non est, sed relatio verissima et Christianis viris notatu dignissima. Veniente festo nostri Salvatoris Jesu Christi, cum isti habuerunt, quoniam ecclesia illis deficiebat, ad vicinam insulam proficisci, ingressi vero in cymba tam invenes quam senes, subita procella orta, aquis insanientibus ultra modum submersi sunt. In qua vero bestię, boves, oves, vituli, fues, canes, caniculi, et omnia alia illic viventia, mira, ferocitate se in mare precipitabant, obrutique sunt, quod quidem verum fuit; nullus ad hunc usque diem coluit.

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*Of the HUSBANDRY used by the ORCHADIANS. In the End of the above MS., but plainly of a later Date, and by another Hand.*

THEY till not till the spring of the year; and as they till so they sow their oats. Their plough is drawn by four beasts going side for side. The caller  
(driver)



(driver) goes before the beasts backward with a whip. The holder of the plough lyes on with his side on the plough: The culter and the sock be not two pound in weight: the oxen be yoaked with cheatts and haims and breachams, which they call weaffis, albeit they have horns. They sow in a creel made of straw, called ane cassie, and of ane handfull they make four casts.

Their horses live on bear-chaff, and grow exceeding fat on the same. They are very little, but quick and fiery. The men here keep the observations of the moon in so far that they stall their marts at the waxing of the moon, affirming they grow in the barrell.

Their calves never suck their mothers. Their corns are very good, to witt, bear and oats. They are handled only by the men; the women neither shake the straw, nor yet winnow the corn. They good their land with sea-ware and lightly midden muck.

MS. Adv. Lib. Edinburgh.

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## APPENDIX, No. VIII.

[From the Collection of Papers respecting Orkney, in possession of the Antiquarian Society of Scotland.]

THE General Assembly, At Edinburgh 1639, Sefs. 8, August 17, 1639.

*Mr. George Grahame, his renouncing and abjuring of Episcopacie.*

*The which day was given into the Assembly, direct from Master George Grahame, sometimes pretended Bishop of Orkney, an abjuration of Episcopacie, subscribed with his hand, which was publickly read in audience of the Assembly; and thereafter they ordained the same to be registrate in the Assembly Books, ad perpetuam rei memoriam, whereof the tenor follows.*

To all and sundry whom it effeirs, to whose knowledge these presents shall come, specially to the Reverend and honourable Members of the fu-



ture Assembly to be holden at *Edinburgh*, the twelfth day of *August* 1639 years: Te Master *George Graham*, sometime pretended Bishop of *Orkney*, being forry and grieved at my heart that I should ever for any worldly respect have embraced the order of Episcopacie, the same having no warrant from the word of God, and being such an order, as hath had sensibly many fearful and evill consequences in many parts of Christendome, and particularly within the Kirk of Scotland, as by doleful and deplorable experience this day is manifest, to have disclaimed, like as I by the tenor hereof doe altogether disclaime and abjure all Episcopal power and jurisdiction, with the whole corruptions thereof, condemned by lawful Assemblies within the said Kirk of *Scotland*, in regard the same is such an order as is also abjured within the said Kirk, by virtue of that national oath which was made in the years 1580 and 1581, promising and swearing by the great name of the Lord our God, that I shall never, whiles I live, directly or indirectly, exerce any such power within the Kirk, neyther yet shall I ever approve or allow the same, not so much as in my private or public discourse: But on the contrary, shall stand and adhere to all the Acts and Constitutions of the late Assembly holden at *Glasgow*, the 21st of November 1638 last by-past, and shall concur to the uttermost of my power, sincerely and faithfully, as occasion shall offer, in execution of the said Acts, and in advancing the work of Reformation within this land, to the glory of God, the peace of the countrey, and the comfort and contentment of all good Christians, as God shall be my help. In testimony of which premises, I have subscribed this present with my hand at *Brecknes* in *Stromnes*, the eleventh day of *February*, the year of God 1639 years, before this witnesses Master *Walter Stuart*, Minister at *Shoulronnaldsay*, Master *James Heynd*, Minister at *Kirkwall*, Master *Robert Peirson*, Minister at *Firth*, and Master *Patrick Grabame*, Minister at *Holme*, my son.

APPENDIX,



## APPENDIX, No. IX.

*A SHORT RELATION of the most CONSIDERABLE THINGS in Orkney, by Mr. MATHEW MACKAILE, Apothecary at Aberdeen.—MS. Adv. Lib. Edin.*

IT is very probable that the inhabitants of the Orcades of old did only speak Noords, or rude Danish; but now there are only three or four parishes (especially upon the Mainland or Pomona) wherein that language is spoken, and that chiefly when they are at their own houses; but all speak the Scots language, as the rest of the commons do.

The common people, though rude and ignorant, are very subtle and sagacious, and capable to learn. They do excell all people for navigation, small boats with 4 or 6 oars, and one or two sails; which is evident from the little prejudice they sustain in going from one island to another, when the tide runneth most impetuously.

The present E. of Morton informed me, that about 1643 he had a regiment of Orkney-men, which was inferior to none in the army. They are necessitate to use little boats, which the sailors must constantly draw without flood-mark, because they have no harbours or keys, though every island hath at least one good rode.

Untill the year 1614, the Earles and Bishops lands were runrigged through Orkney and Zetland, the former having two, and the latter one; but then Bishop Law and the Chapter did resign all to the Kirk, who did appoint the Bishop his rent to be payed out of 4 or 5 parishes in the Mainland, and two or three islands.

In every island almost where there is a valley by the sea-side, there is also a fresh-water lake, as was at the town of Kirkwall; where, at the end of the wall, divideing the fresh from the salt water, (like an artificial bulwark, as it is in all other fresh places), they did cut, that the fresh water might run  
into



into the sea, which ever since doth flow into and ebb out of it, where the ships ly very securely. In this town is a very stately Cathedral, having thre very good bells, which fell to the ground, the wooden cover of the steeple being set on fire by thunder in the year 1666 or 1667.

The products of these islands are only oats, common barley, coney-skins, fish, oil and butter; which last, the tenants, being obliged to pay by weight, without respect to its goodness when they make it, they put a hot stone into the churn, that they may get much of the butter, and in a short time, which maketh it soon become rancid. They afterwards put it up in barrells, and because some do put in a considerable quantity of dry salt to make it weigh well, they pierce it in several places with a wimble for discovering the cheat.

They carry their victual ordinarily to Zetland (in which islands there groweth not so much every year as would maintain the inhabitants three months) or Norway, and sometimes to Leith.

It is all sold by weight, and that which is equivalent to a boll they call a meil, viz. pounds, which is half as much again in quantity as a boll, but of the same rate; and a meil of their malt will afford no more good ale than a boll of malt growing in the south.

Because all the land (excepting the parish of Harra, in the west end and broadest part of the Mainland, and far from the sea) is dinged with sea-ware, the ale is sharp; and all strangers for the first month or six weeks are troubled with a little diarrhea, wherein there is no hazard.

They gather the sea-ware (which is frequently and especially cast out by the sea) into heaps, which, being putrified, affordeth a very bad smell, and many insects, which the sterlings do feed upon, and therefore it is ordinary to see hundreds of these birds upon each heap.

All the Islands are high and rocky, excepting Sanda and Burra. The inhabitants at the west end of the Mainland, and at the east, but especially those in Copinshay, purchase a great many feathers, by taking the sea fowles from off the high rocks, letting down a man with a strong rope about his middle, and he throweth the birds into the boat attending below.

The



The height and steepness of these rocks are incredible, but by those that have seen them.

Sometimes very big whales will be put on shoar. The Laird of Mains, then heritour of Burra, got a great ball of spermaceti cast out of the sea upon one of his islands, which he sent to London, and got considerably for it.

In the year 1664, a merchant in Kirkwall having sold by retail several barrels of whale oil, when the last of them was half spent, a woman regretted to him that she had got from this man very bad and thick oil, where-with she could not get her wool greased. He having told me of this, and letting me see some of it, I lent him my press, whereby, putting it in a linnen bag, he did separate the oil from that which is called spermaceti, whereof he got two three pounds. It having been long amongst the oil, had contracted a very rancid smell, and brownish colour, neither of which qualities I knew how to remove, and therefore he sold it at Edinburgh at twelvepence or a shilling the ounce. From hence it is evident that conerit hath got a wrong name; moreover, it is not every sort of whales which affordeth that substance, which is altogether sulphureous and inflamable.

These Islands abound with wild fowls, plovers; doves which make their nests in the rocks; swans, ducks, &c.; geise of several sorts, and particularly clock geise, which come thither in the end of harvest, and go away immediately before the spring; yet Monteith of Egilshay informed me, that one year they did hatch their eggs in his Holme, which confirmed me in my unbelieveing that these geise are generate out of trees.

For I have not only seen an old tree full of those shells, like to muscles, wherein they are said to be found, but also fresh stern posts of ships, which no man would believe to be six months wrought.

But they have no partridges at all, nor ordinary black crows (only, in the four years of my abode there, I saw once three of them three miles west of the town), but abundance of those which have black heads and wings, with grey bodies: they have also many ravens, which first pick out the eyes of the lambs, and then kill them.

There are no foxes nor hares, only I was informed, that about eighty years ago there were several, either white or black hares, on the two great mountains.



mountains of Choye, betwixt which, amongst the heather, much juniper, affording few, if any ripe berries. Some bourtrees, birks, rauntrees, do grow, but when they become so big as to be useful for boats, the inhabitants make pins of them.

Many of the marishes trees have the *salix humilis latifolia*; and at the east end of the Main, and head of Deersound, at Camstoun, there is a little wood, (about two pair of butts in length, and one broad, and as tall as a man), of the ordinary *salix angustifolia*, or *viminia*.

Near to the town of Kirkwall are a few whins, (which the Earl of Orkney caused plant when I was there, 1664. Arthur Buchanan of Sound inclosed a little ground, but the broom seed did never appear above ground. In the Bishop's garden, which is in the town, are some apple and cherry trees, which, in an extraordinary hot year, will produce cherries a little red about Lammas. Several gentlemen have planted ashes and plains in their gardens; but whatsoever groweth higher than the dikes, fadeth the next winter, so that you can never see them taller than the dikes, save in the summer. It were worth the disquisition, how this commeth to pass; seeing trees do grow in Norway, which for the most part is more northerly.

All the islands are well fired, by reason of the abundance of moss ground, Sanda, N. Ronaldshay excepted, wherein are no peats at all; but the inhabitants bring them from Etha (betwix which islands runneth a most impetuous current), or the little island beside it, called the Calf of Etha, wherein the Earl of Carric, son to the E. of Orkney, built five salt pans, because the peats there are little inferiour to coals, in weight, hardness, and burning well.

In January 1665, the frost and snow continued fourteen days, the like thereof none then alive had seen there.

The horses are little, and go all barefoot, unless the gentlemen put shoes upon the horses upon which they ride themselves.

The swine and sheep are also little, but very good, two or three places excepted, where they and the cows do eat together sea-ware, which maketh their tallow a little brownish, and also altereth their taste.

There are many eagles, especially at the west end of the Main, and in Choye. I was very well informed, that an eagle did take up a swaddled child



child a month old, which the mother had laid down untill she went to the back of the peat-stack at Honton-head, and carried it to Choye, viz. 4 miles, which being discovered by a traveller, who heard the lamentations of the mother, four men went presently thither in a boat, and, knowing the eagle's nest, found the child, without any prejudice done to it.

There are also many hawks, but the best is that of the Fair Isle, lying 30 miles from Orkney, and as far from Zetland; so that his flight is that long. From the top of the eastmost mountain in Choye, about one afternoon for 10 or 12 days, and an hour's time in the middle of June and July, the sun shining there appeareth a great light, like to that of the sun reflected from a large mirror, to any standing at the Bow or chief house in Choye, which is upon the north-west corner of the isle, and 2 miles distant from the top of the mountain, to which the Lairde of Hailes, then heretour of Choye, had sent several times men to search the place reflecting the light, but they could find nothing extraordinary; which Hales told myself. At the foot of this mountain I did see a very large four corner'd free stone, lying altogether above ground, and under it runneth a little stripe of water not a foot broad.

There are no extraordinary big stones near to it, neither the appearance of any quarry out of which it was digged. Yet it was so big, that having a round hole in the upper side, I went down thereby, and found two beds hewed out with irons, and a little trance betwixt them, the one being for a man, alike wide from end to end, and the other for a woman, being much wider in the middle, that it might hold her belly when with child. It doth most resemble the cabin of a small ship.

At Deerness and in Gremsie were two lead mines of old; but now Gremsie affordeth only slates for thatching of houses. I did never see bigger artichocks than there, where also carrots, parsnips, &c. do grow to great bigness; and I was informed by the owner, that at Birsá he had once a cabbage stock which weighed 32 pounds.

In Egilshay and Thievesholme, so called because of old the gibbet stood here, is found a groff sort of sand, whitish, and like corall in shape.

In Thief's-holme, I found of it not only whitish, but also another sort very reddish, and about an inch long. The inhabitants take of this sand



which is in Egilshay, and do mix it with lime brought from Forth; then make an heap of it till the next year, after which they plaister with it their houses without, which preserveth them much and long from the injuries of rain.

In Deerfound, and about the island Damsay, are oysters, which are taken at low water, by piercing them with spits of iron as they ly amongst the rocks.

Bees are so rare there, that a young man, in the end of April, stopt the skep (which a lady had taken thither from Angus) with a piece of a peat. About 8 days thereafter, the Laird going to look after them, found them all dead. His family being convened, he inquired who had done it. The actor did confidently answer, that upon such a day he did it, because they were all flying away.

About Lammas, the inhabitants do sometimes send a boat or two 40 miles west, to an island called Stack, (which is most like to the Bafs, and lyeth 40 miles north from Stranaver), where they get abundance of solan geese; and this is the place to which those which build in the Bafs do all go after August or September, from which they return again in the spring.

Near to this is another isle, called Selch-kerry, to which they go also in the winter, when there is a strong frost and calm. There they kill many seals, which they find lying on the isle, and bring away their skins and fat.

The ewes in Orkney have ordinarily 2 lambs, frequently 3, and sometimes 4; and I was informed by a gentleman there, that one of his ewes did at one time bring forth 4 lambs, 3 whereof were lame in their fore-legs, and went on their knees.

ACCOUNT



ACCOUNT of the CURRENT of the TIDES about the ORCADES, by Mr MAT. MACKAILE, communicated by him to Sir ROBERT MURRAY, President of the Royal Society, and published by him in No.

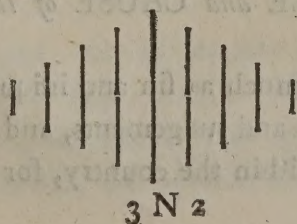
In Faray Sound, betwixt the isles of Fairy and Etha in Orkney, the sea runneth N. E. for the space of three hours in flowing, and 9 hours S. W. in ebbing.

This is the course of the tide only in the middle of the Sound, which is but one mile broad.

The next isle to Faray, towards the S. W., is Westray, which is an isle about 5 miles in length, and 3 or 4 miles in breadth. Upon the S. E. side of this island, within a mile of the shoar, lyeth another little isle, which is not half a mile in circumference. S. and S. W. from these two islands is Westray Firth, 8 miles in breadth, running betwixt them and the island called Raufa.

Through this firth the English ships do ordinarily pass in their course to Iceland.

While the sea runneth from W. to E. in flowing through this Westra Frith, there are no greater surges than in any other place of the sea; and in a calm day, it is as smooth as any lake, though there is constantly a great current in the flux and reflux of the sea; yet at the S. E. end of the fore-mentioned little island, the sea no sooner begins to run westward in ebbing, but there beginneth a surge to appear, which continually encreaseth untill the ebb be half spent; and afterwards it decreaseth untill it be low water, at which time there appeareth no such thing. East and west from this great surge, there are some few lesser surges seen, which are gradually less towards the east and west, after this manner:



I having



I having occasion to pass that way in a little boat, when we had passed over the eastmost surges, and were beginning to ascend the biggest, upon the 10th of April, at one of the clock in the afternoon, the surge before us was so high, that it intercepted the light of the sun, and some degrees of the firmament above it.

This surge is about a quarter of a mile in length. When there is any wind, which occasioneth a braking of the tops of the surges, there is no passing that way. The current of the tide is so strong there, that there is no need of sails or of oars, save only to direct the boat as doth the helm.

*MS. Adv. Lib. Edinburgh.*

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## APPENDIX, No. X.

### *The ACTS of BAILIARY for executing of Justice through the County of ORKNEY.*

Curia capitalis vice comitatus de Orkney et Zetland, tenta apud Kirkwam, in domo nova prope Palatium de Yeardis ibidem, per honorabiles viros, viz. Henricum Stewartum de Carlingre, et Magistrum Gulielmum Livingstonem, vice comites deputatos dicti vice comitatus, septimo die mensis Novembris, anno Domini millesimo sexcentesimo et decimo quinto.

### *The PREAMBLE and CAUSE of the ACTS following.*

THE which day, forasmuch as sin and iniquity is and has been the cause of God's heavie pleagues and judgements, and the cause of great desolation in the kirk and policy within the country, for laike of discipline and putting



ting of the acts of the church into execution, which has been meikle complained upon in times past, and sicklike that there has been great ignorance of his sacrad Maities royal supream authority, in practising of forreign and uncoth laws, contrairy to the acts of Parliament and Secret Council made thereanent, and likewise that there has been great desolations, no common well, disorder, trouble, injuries, and wrongs, amongst the inhabitants of the land, for laike of government, administratione, and putting the samen to due execution: Therefore, it is statute and ordained by the sherife-depute, with advice and consent of the gentlemen suitors of court, and commons, all with ane advice, consent and assent, as after follows, viz.

ACT 2. *Anent the putting of the Acts of the Kirk in execution.*

In the first place, it is statute and ordained, for punishing of sin and vice, that the acts of the Church made and to be made by the ministers and their Session of Church, against transgressours and sinners, be put in due execution with all rigour, in example for others to doe the like; and to this effect, the Baillies of each parish, and his officer, incurr and assist your ministers, elders and officers, in putting of all such acts and statutes made and to be made in their Sessions of Church, to due execution as said is, for maintenance of God's worship, keeping of the Sabbath, suppressing all idolatry, especially of walks and pilgrimages, and all other vices, and punishing the refractive and disobedient to their discipline, under the pain of deprivatione and payment of 10 pounds, to be employed in pious uses.

ACT 3. *Anent the Obedience to his Majesties Laws, and Provision for Armour.*

*Item,* It is statute and ordained, that all manner of persons, of whatsumever rank, quality, or pedigree, shall honour their dread Sovereign the King's Majesty, and submite themselves with all reverence to his authority, in obeying his laws, acts, statutes, and constitutions, and renouncing all



forreign laws, acts, statutes, and constitutions, quhatsumever, observed heretofore, under the pains contained in the acts of Parliament and most Honourable Privie Council made thereanent; and that all men, according to their aid and degree, provide themselves in sufficient armour, according to their estate, and be in readines to serve his Majestie, or his deputs present, or that shall be for the time, for suppressing and withstanding the incurfions of perrils, and other tumultuous perfoncs, as they will be answerable upon the highest perrill.

ACT 4. *Anent the Careful Directing of the Corfs.*

*Item,* It is statute and ordained, to the effect that ilk house and family shall carefully and diligently direct the corfs, according to the order and customis, to his next neighbours, with ane sufficient bearer, for admonishing the people either to convene to church, for preaching or prayers, or for his Majesties service, and such other necessary causes, as shall be thought expedient by the minister, sherriffs, institutioners, or their baillies, and shall not stay or lay down the same, but direct it with all diligence, upon the receipt thereof, under the pain of 7 pounds Scots *toties quoties*.

ACT 5. *Anent the Marking of Pundlars and Bismars.*

*Item,* It is statute and ordained, that all pundlars and bismars be marked with his Majesties mark, betwixt and the                      day of next to come, under the pain of 10 pounds Scots for the first fault, and doubling of the said pain so oft as shall hapen to trangress thereafter; and that by and attour the act of Parliament made thereanent, and pains contained thereintill, and punishment be inflicted upon the contemnors hereof.



ACT 6. *Anent the Weight of Cassies.*

*Item,* It is statute and ordained, that no cassie be heavier than a half setting weight, conform to the old statutes made thereanent, under the pain of 40 shill. Scots for the first fault, and doubling thereof for the second fault, and confiscatione of the victuall contained therein for the third fault; and that by and attour the punishment of their persons at the will of the judge.

ACT 7. *Anent Herding of Goods, and putting them without Dykes; the Sufficiency of Dykes.*

*Item,* It is statute and ordained, that good neighbourhood be kept amongst neighbours in ilk parochine in all time comming, in bigging of their dikes yearly, and putting of their swine to the hill before the fifteenth day of March, keeping and herding of their sheep before the said day of Aprile, and keeping of their horse, nolt, and other bestiall before the first day of May, under the pain of 40 shill. Scots, to be payd to the sherrif or his deputes; and in case of contraveining and breaking hereof, so that neighbours be damnified and hurt, by others not timeous dyking and herding, as is above written, in that case the contraveener to pay to the party interested and skaithed as follows, viz. before Lammas shall pay for ilk sheep 3 shill., and for ilk swine 10 shill., for each horse, nolt, and mairt 4 shill. *toties quoties*; and after Lammas shall pay the double of ilk paine *toties quoties*, as they, or any of them, shall be found within the dykes, and lawfully tryed before the baillie of the paroch to have been in their neighbours skaith. The dykes being made lawfull and sufficient of the gage of 5 quarters hight the utter dike, and their corn and keill yard dikes to be of the height of 7 quarters hight, according to the standard of the country: Likeas, immediately after the tryall of the said baillies, it shall be lawsum to him to poind and uplift the said pains, and that by and attour the compyryng



ing of the skaith and payment of the sum, conform to the daily practice observed in such cases.

ACT 8. *Anent Grinds and the Closing thereof.*

*Item,* It is statute and ordained, that all grinds and flops on all highways shall be closed by all strangers that enter thereby, in such sort as they open the said grinds and gets, they shall be holden incontinently to close the samen again under the pain of 40 shill. Scots *toties quoties*, and no common grinds or gets to be stoped or closed up that has not been of old and not necessar or needfull, to be under the pain of 10 pounds Scots.

ACT 9. *Anent Feeing of other Mens Servants.*

*Item,* It is statute and ordained, that it shall not be lawsum to any persone or persones, to fie, hyre, or conduce any other man's servants, except they be discharged by their masters, or they discharge their masters lawfullie, 40 days before any lawful term; and that gentlemen, boundsmen, nor no others receive any such persons, nor give them hospitality, nor entertainment, nor yet to set to them houses, nor receive support, nor supply any vagabounds, idle men, nor unlawful women, under the pain of 10 pound Scots *toties quoties*.

ACT 10. *Anent Rancelling of Theft.*

*Item,* It is statute and ordained, for effewing of theft in time comming, that it be lawsum to the party interestet with the baillie or officer of their paroch, or two or three honest men to be chosen by him, to raise, search, and seek all houses, and suspect places within the samen, and if neid beis, in case of suspicion, to pass to the next paroch, or beyond the samen; and to this effect ordains the baillie of each paroch, or the officer, to concurr  
with



with the party interest in manner forsaide, for apprehending thereof as they will effew to be repute and holden as partakers of the saids crimes.

ACT 11. *Anent Riding of other Mens Horses.*

*Item,* It is statute and ordained, that whatsumever persone or persones shall be tryed, or apprehended to have ridden another man's horse, without licience of the owner, within the parochine where the owner of the horse dwells, shall pay to the sherreife, or his deputes, the sum of 6 pounds of Scots money; and if he be found without the parochine where the owner dwells, shall pay the double of the said paine; and farder, according to the distance of the paroch out of which the said horse should be taken, shall triple and quadruple the said paine, effeirand to the sevearell paroches wherethrough it shall happen them to ride the said horse: Likewise, it shall not be lawsum to any persone or persones, to cut or steall another man's horse taill, under the pain of ten pounds Scots; and if the ryders, steallers, or cutters forsaide, shall have no money to fatisfie therefore proportionally as above written, then they are to be punished in their persons, effeirand to the deed and offence, at the discretion of the judge.

ACT 12. *Anent Buying and Selling with other Mens Servants.*

*Item,* It is statute and ordained, that no man seduce any bargain, nor sell with any man's servant by the knowledge of his master, as they will effew to be punished as receptors of theft; and it being tryed, the gear to be restored to the right owner, butt payment of the price thereof, or thing receaved for the famen.



ACT 13. *Anent Slaying and Selling of Fleſh.*

*Item,* It is ſtatute and ordained, that no fleſhers, or other buyers and ſlayers of fleſh, ſhall ſell to any inhabitant within the town, nor without the ſamen, as fleſhars, untill the time they come to the baillie of the quarter, and ſhew him the beaſt, the mark, and the man's name from whom he bought the ſame, who ſhall be holden to commit the buyer's name in write, together with the beaſt, and the mark thereof, and frae whom and what time the ſaimen was bought, as the ſlayers and fellers of the ſaid beaſt will eſſew to be holden and repute as ſteallers thereof.

ACT 14. *Anent Sluggiſh and Idle Perſons.*

*Item,* Forasmuch as there are many unconstant, ſluggiſh, and idle perſons, who, leaving ſervice, gives themſelves to traffect, and play the merchant, and attend the reparation of ſhips and ſtrangers, to riet and uſual places, and reſort and go on ſhipboard under cloud of night, or privately, under colour of buying and ſelling of merchandice, and goods under the pretext thereof, they picke and ſteall both from the commonty people to ſell to them, and from them to the country people; For remeid whereof, It is ſtatute and ordained, that no ſuch perſons ſhall haunt, nor traffect, nor frequent on ſhipboard of any ſtranger, dogger, buying or ſelling merchandice or goods under whatſumever pretext or colour, but ſuch as ſhall be allowed or approven by the baillie of the paroch where they dwell, and for whom the ſaid baillie, or one or two honeſt men of the paroch, ſhall be answerable, under the pain of 40 ſhill., and warding of their perſones, for the firſt fault, and doubling of the ſaid paine for the ſecond fault, and ſo furth, tripling and quadrupling the ſaid paine and puniſhment, ſo oft as they ſhall happen to come in the contrairty thereof.



ACT 15. *Anent the Transporting of Vagabonds to Zetland.*

*Item*, Forasmuch as it is heavily complained upon by the inhabitants of Zetland, of the great resort and repair, partly of sturdy beggars, and partly of vagabonds, from Orkney, Caithness, and other foreign places, who starve and beg, and overlie the country, by begging, stealing, picking, and oppressing the inhabitants thereof; Therefore it is statute and ordained, that no master of ship, barque, boat, nor crew, transport any such manner of persons, nor no others, who, under colour and pretext to play the merchant, intends to resort to the said country to buy the commodities thereof, in prejudice of the payment of his Majesties duties, butt ane sufficient testimonial, or warrant of the sherrif or his depute, granted and had to that effect under the pain of 20 pounds Scots.

ACT 16. *Anent the Sale of Victuall.*

*Item*, Forasmuch as his Majestie and his chamberlains are meikle prejudiced yearly by the tenants, tacksmen, and others, adebted in the yearly paym<sup>t</sup> of the fruits, rents, and duties due to be payd by them, by selling their bestiall, butter, oyle, and victuall, before the saids chamberlains be satisfied and payed.

Therefore, it is statute and ordained, that no such persons shall sell, analzie, dispoise, nor put away any bestiall, butter, nor oyle before St Andrews day yearly, nor any victuall, bear, malt, or meall, till the first of Lammas yearly, that his Majesties rent be satisfied and payed, under the pain of forty pounds Scots, and that by and attour the dearest pryses, and highest fiars that can be exacted of them by law, except to the town of Kirkwall, or then a licence be granted upon the reasonable cause.



ACT 17. *Anent the Entertaining of Beggars.*

*Item*, Forasmuch as there is a great repair of poor beggars, strangers, idle, and vagabond persons that overlays the country, who have not been born nor brought up in the country, contrary to the laudable laws made thereanent, Therefore it is statute and ordained, that no man support, supply, nor intertain the saids persons, nor grant hospitality to them, under the pain of 40 shillings Scots; and fikelike that no man transport nor bring within the country, any such persons in time comming, under the pain of 40 shill. ; and conform to the saids acts, the said persons, and every one of them, may repaire to their own country and paroch; and that ilk paroch intertain, supply, and sustain their own poor, according to the will and ordinance thereof in all points: And in case any such persons shall be found going hereafter without their said paroches, then it shall be lawsum to the finder and apprehender to put them to the baillie of the paroch, to be punished as idle vagabonds in the joggis or stocks; and if the baillie absent himself, or refuse to cause punish them conform to the premisses, or to put them to the sherreif or his deputs present, or that shall happen to be for the time, he shall be holden to pay to the sherrieif or his deputs the sum of 20 *L.* Scots mony.

ACT 18. *Anent the Concealling of Theft, and Sin of Witchcraft and Waitb.*

*Item*, It is statute and ordained, that no persone or persones of any rank, quality, or degree, shall hide or conceal any kind of theft, forcerie, nor witchcraft, bloodwrong nor injuries, robbery, oppression, wrack or waith, but shall impart, shew and direct the same to their baillies, or to their shierreif deputs, as they will effew to be holden and repute as partakers thereof, and punished therefore, conform to the laws and practise of this realme.



ACT 19. *Anent the Putting of the foresaid Acts in Execution.*

And finally, It is statute and ordained by the said sherreif-deputes, that the baillie of ilk paroch shall make publication thereof at their paroch church door, wherby none pretend ignorance of the premisses; and that the saids acts, and every one of them, they shall putt to due execution, in the haill heads, articles, and clausses thereof, for maintenance of God's worship, the reverend obedience of his Majesties most royall and supream authority and laws, and for the good and peace of the inhabitants of the land; and, in case it shall happen, the saids baillies, or any of them, to be tryed and found to have oppressed and wronged any persone or persones within their bailliary, by taking of unlawfull service, or by taking of bodes or brybes for perverting of justice, or in any sort of oppressing the poor, or doing of any other deed of the like nature and quality, contrairy to equity and reason, in that case they shall be holden to repaire the wrongs at the sight of the sherreif-depute, and shall be esteemed as unworthy to bear office or order in any time comming; and that by and attour the due punishment to be inflicted upon them according to the demerit of their fault.

Curia capitalis vice comitatus de Orknay et Zetland, tenta apud Kirkwam in insula vocata de Wallhouse, in Templo St Magni ibidem, per Honorabilem virum Dominum Johannem Buchannannum de Scots Craig, militem, vice comitem principalem dicti vice comitatus, septimo et undecimo diebus Novembris, anno Domini millesimo sexcentesimo et vigesimo tertio.



ACT 20. *Anent the Selling of Viſtual, Butter, Beare, Meale, and Heavie Caſſies.*

*Curia legitima affirmata.*

The which day, the ſaid ſherriſ principall, with advice and conſent of the gentlemen ſuitors of court, and baillies of parochines, after long deliberation and good conſideratione had by them, for redreſs of certain enormities and wrongs cruppen in the country by iniquity of time, to the great prejudice of the ſame and commonwell thereof, ratifies and approves the general acts made of before, and wills and ordains the ſamen to be put to due execution in all time comming; and, in ſpeciall, ratifies that act made of before, that no man ſell butter, malt, nor meall before Lammas day yearly, except to the town of Kirkwall, under the pains contained thereintill: *Item*, The acts made anent caſſies, that no caſſie be heavier than half of ſetting weight, under the paines contained in the acts made thereanent.

ACT 21. *Anent Selling of Wine.*

*Item*, It is ſtatute and ordained by the ſherreiff, with advice and conſent forſaid, that in time comming no ſort of wine ſhall be ſold at ane higher rate than they ſell the ſame in the burgh of Edinburg, under the pain of 40 ſhill. *toties quoties.*

ACT 22. *Anent the Selling of Ale.*

*Item*, It is ſtatute and ordained, with the advice and conſent forſaid, that no ale be ſold at ane higher price than 6d. per pint of 40 ſhillings malt; 7d. the pint of 3 L. malt; and 10d. the pint of 4 L. malt; 12d. the pint of 5 L. malt; 14d. the pint of 6 L. malt, and ſwa furth accordingly, under the paine of 40 ſhill. Scots *toties quoties.*



ACT 23. *Anent Shutting in other Mens Links and Holmes.*

*Item*, Forasmuch as there is a great abuse in hounting, shutting, and delving in other mens links and holmes, contrairy to the acts of Parliament and diverse laudable laws made of before, Therefore, it is statute and ordained by the Sherreif, with advice and consent forsaide, That no man hunt with dogs nor nets, nor shut in other mens links nor holmes, in time comming, under the pains of 40 L.'s Scots; nor delve in the saids links or holmes, nor repaire to the saide holms without leave of the owner, under the paine of 40 shill. *toties quoties*.

ACT 24. *Anent Selling of Fishes.*

*Item*, It is statute and ordained by the saide Sherreif, with advice and consent foresaid, That no man shall sell fishes to strangers, or packers or peilers of fishes within the country, or without the samen, to be sold again, from the first of February to the last day of May yearly, under the paine of 10 L.'s Scots; and frae that time furth they prefer their neighbours, and sell their saids fishes to the country people, for their necessity and entertainment, before strangers, if they require the same, under the like paine.

ACT 25. *Anent Selling of Butter and others, by way of Regretting.*

*Itt*. It is statute and ordained, by the saide Sherrife, with advice and consent forsaide, for restraining of regrating, That none sell mairts, fishes, oyle, butter, victuall, nor no sort of vivars, at the Town-road nor Town-head of Kirkwall, nor upon the Shoar thereof, nor within the town to sell again for their privie gain, inbrought by any man, to be sold again within the town, but bring the same to the Mercate Crofs, as they will  
effew



eslew to be challenged to be regraters, and punished therefore conform to the saids laws and daylie practique and acts of Parliament made thereanent.

ACT 26. *Anent Cutting of Bent and Floss.*

*Item,* It is statute and ordained by the said Sherreif, with advice and consent forsaid, That no persone shall cut bent nor pull floss, in time comming, before the first of Lammas yearly, under the paine of 10 L.'s Scots.

ACT 27. *Anent the Selling of Land.*

*Item,* It is statute and ordained by the said Sherreif, with advice and consent forsaid, That no landed man nor bounds man shall sell land, from this time, to any person or persons, unless they be able with their own goods and gear to labour in the Mainland and South Isles ane farding land, in the North Isles ane penny land, under the pain of 20 libs. Scots.

ACT 28. *Anent Sheep Dogs.*

*Item,* It is statute and ordained, That it shall not be lawsum to keep sheep-dogs, but such persons as are chosen by the Baillies and parochiners, whose names are taken up in ilk parochine already, and for which they shall be holden to answer, under the pain of 10 L.'s Scots.

ACT 29. *Anent going to the Hill.*

*Item,* It is statute and ordained, That it shall not be lawsum to any man, at any time of day, but especially after sun-setting and after sun-rising, to



go thro' his neighbour's cloggand or commonty with ane sheep-dog, except to be accompanied with two neighbours, famous witnesses; and if he be found contrairy to the tenor hereof, he shall be holden to pay for his first fault 6 lib., and if the second time 7 lib., and if the third time, or under cloud of night, being any way suspected, he shall be repute, holden, and punished as a common thief.

ACT 30. *Anent Rowing of Sheep.*

*Item,* It is statute and ordained, That it shall not be lawsum to any manner of persons to row sheep untill the time they be lawfullie certified by the Baillie to ane competent day, as they will effue to be holden and repute as thieves, and punished conform thereto.

*Apud Kirkwam, primo die mensis Julii 1623.*

The which day, in presence of ROBERT SINCLAIR of Campston, and EDWARD SINCLAIR of Ælstonquoy, Sherreif-deputs in Orkney, with consent of the Provost and Baillies of this burgh, having consideration of the poverty and necessity of the poor people, their scarcity and want of vivars for their entertainment, and for the great abuse of forestalling and regraiting of fishes, have statute and ordained, That no inhabitants in burgh and land shall repair to Dearness, St Andrews paroch, Holme, or Paplay, for buying of fishes this present year, under the paine of 10 libs. *toties quoties.*

And that the said parochoners of Dearness and St Andrews that take, flay, and sell fishes, shall, with convenient diligence after they come to the said, repair to the town and sell the saids fishes at the mercate, under the paine of 10 libs. Scots, *toties quoties* it shall hapen them to sell, contraveen the premisses, or any point above written.

*Apud Kirwam, 10<sup>mo</sup> die 10<sup>bris</sup>, 1625.*

The which day, the Bishop, Sherreif, Baillies, and fundrie others gentlemen, being conveened for setting down order how the enemy should be re-



sisted in case of invasion, it was concluded and agreed upon, That all manner of men shall convene, with all possible dilligence, at Kirkwall, in their best attire and aray, immediately after they shall see the wart of Whiteford Hill on fire, and therefrae to follow directioun from that part of that any invasion shall be. For the better effectuating thereof, it is ordained, that all manner of men that have boats shall have the same sufficiently provided and water-tight, for transporting of men, arms, and other necessaries; and that ilk Baillie shall see the same done within his own bounds; and that the saids Baillies shall appoint ane place within ilk one of their bailliaries where the people shall convene, that therefrae they may resort to Kirkwall as said is. That it may be the better perceived by the haill country when the wart of Whiteford Hill shall be on fire, it is ordained, that ilk Baillie, within his own bounds, shall appoint ane convenient watch to attend thereupon, and immediately upon light of the fire of Whiteford Hill, to put their watch on fire, that the rest of the country may be warned. And also it is concluded, that all Baillies be advertised that they inroll all manner of persones what weapons they have; and, by the advice of some of the most discreet men of his bailliary, make a note of what every man is able to use and carry, and what he is able to buy.

**ACT 31. *Anent Slaying of the Earn.***

*Apud Kirkwam, 8<sup>vo</sup> die 9<sup>bris</sup>, 1626.*

The which day, it is statute and ordained by THOMAS BUCHANNAN, Sherreif-deput of Orknay, with consent of the gentlemen and suitors of Court present for the time, That whatever persone shall slay the earn or eagle shall have of the Baillie of the parochine where it shall happen him to slay the aigle 8d. from every reik within the parochine, except from cottars that have no sheep, and 20 shill. from ilk persone for ilk earn's nest it shall happen them to herrie; and they shall present them to the Baillie, and the Baillie shall be holden to present the head of the said earn at ilk Head Court.



Curia capitalis vice comitatus de Orkney, tenta apud Kirkwam in insula vocata de Wall house, in templo St Magni ibidem, per honorabiles viros Magistrum Johannem Dick et Robertum Monteith de Eglishay vice comites deputatos dicti vice comitatus, sexto die mensis Februarii, anno Domini 1628.

ACT 32. *Anent the Ratification of the former Acts, and especially anent keeping of Sheep Dogs, with ane addition of Running Dogs.*

The which day, the said Sherreif-deputs, with consent of the haill gentlemen suitors of Court, and commonty, present for the time, Ratifies the haill acts made of before be Harry Stewart and Mr. John Livingstone, Sherreif-deputes of Orkney present for the time, and Sir John Buchannan, of Scots Craig, Knight, Sherreif-principall of Orknay; and, in speciall, that act made anent keeping of sheep-dogs, that no man shall keep sheep-dogs, except those that are, or should be, nominate by the Sherreif or by the seaverall Baillies of parochines of the country; and that no man shall keep running dogs, that run frae house to house, or thro' the country, slaying their neighbours sheep, under the paine of contained in the saids acts.

ACT 33. *Anent Rowing of Sheep on Sunday.*

*Item*, It is statute and ordained, by the said Sherreif-deputes, with consent forsaide, That no maner of persons shall row or take sheep on Sunday, under whatsumever colour or pretext, under the paine of 10 libs. Scots.

ACT 34. *Anent Fugative Servants and Young Men going to Zetland.*

*Item*, Forasmuch as many lands are laid lay and weast by the frequent death of the labourers of the ground these years bygone, thro' the great



scarcity, famene, and death of the land, and by the repaire of English ships to the countrie, who fie, hyre, and conduce young men and servants to leave their parents and masters, and follow them to the fishing to Iceland, the Lewis, and other parts thereabout, to the great prejudice of the labouring of the ground and winning of the lay lands within the famen, Therefore, it is statute and ordained, That no young men nor servents shall fie, hyre, nor be conduced with any such strangers furth of the country, without ane testimoniall from the minister, Baillie, or two or three of the elders of ilk Isle or paroch, under the paine of twenty pound Scots, to be payed of the readiest goods they have or leave behind them; and in case of no goods poindable, to be poinded immediately after their return; and failzing of their goods poindable, to be punished in their bodies as the Sherreif and his deputs shall think expedient.

**ACT 35. *Ane Statute Petitioning our Council.***

*Item,* It is statute and ordained, That ane supplication be made and direct to the Lords of his most Secret Council, for procuring warrand and decreets discharging all such ships, barques, or crears to intake all such persons as young men and servants, under the paine their Lordships shall think fit.

**ACT 36. *Anent Cordiners and Sellers of Leather.***

*Apud Kirkwam, 4<sup>to</sup> 9<sup>bris</sup>, 1640.*

The which day, Mr Hary Aitkin and Thomas Buchannan, Sherreif-deputs of Orkney, being judicially conveyned, with the gentlemen and suitors of Court, present for the time, and having consideration of the exorbitant prices of cordiners, and daily complaints and outcries made thereanent, have, for the good and profite of the commonwell, statute and ordained, in time comming, That the saids cordiners shall make good and sufficient



sufficient work for 20d. the inch of double soled leather; and for bairns double soled shoes, having but one seam, they shall exact no more but 14d. for the inch; and 12d. the inch of sufficient single soled shoes thereof, under the paine of 40 shillings, *toties quoties*, to be paid to the Sherreif by the contraveener. And if the saids cordiners shall happen to be negligent in their callings, and become negligent and idle, swa oft as they shall be tryed, they shall pay L. 4; and for working ilk hide in the owner's own house, they are by thir presents discharged to exact any more than 20 shill., with their entertainment. Likewise, all persones are inhibite to sell any leather out of the country, under the paine of 10 L. Scots, *toties quoties*, by the seller, and confiscation of the leather bought by the buyer, to the Sherreif; and that ordained to be intimate at all church doors within this sherreifdome.

ACT 37. *Anent Transporting of Tanned Leather.*

*Item*, Forasmuch as it is dailie complained upon, that the hydes, barked leather, and tallow are transported furth of the country, whereby they cannot have shews to serve them, their bairns and servants necessities, nor tallow for giving them light, it is statute and ordained, by the said Sherreif-deputs, with consent forsaid, but any opposition in the contrair, That no manner of persons, in time comming, shall transport any barqued or tanned leather or tallow furth of the country, untill the time it be offered to the shoemakers of the town, or, if within the parochine, to the Baillie, whereby the country may be served, under the paine of 10 L. Scots, and confiscatione of the transported goods.

ACT 38. *Anent that none Mark Sheep on the Mark called the King's Mark.*

*Item*, It is statute and ordained by the said Sherreif-deputs, with consent forsaid, butt any opposition in the contrair, except by Mr. Robert

Henryfone



Henryfone of Holland, and Thomas Traill in name of his father, who alledge a warrand from the Councill for the mark under written; and protested in the contrair, that no man shall use the mark called of old the King's Mark, which is both the luggs, except those in the Isles, who had the same in umquhill Robert and Patrick Earls of Orknay their time; and that none presume to mark their sheep with the said mark in time to come, within the Mainland, as they will effew to be repute and holden as markers of other mens sheep, and punished therefore as accords of the law; and that those who have sheep marked with the said mark shall cause put ane burn upon their sheep, and shall mark none hereafter upon that mark, under the paine of confiscatione of the sheep swa marked.

ACT 39. *Anent Pundlars and Bismars.*

*Septimo Februarii 1628.*

*Item,* The said Sherreif-deputes, with consent forsaid, ratifie the act made of before, that all pundlars and bismars be marked with the mark called the King's Mark, under the pains contained thereintill, with the addition, that every pundlar be justed and made equal with the King's pundlar; and that none have poundlars or bismars of greater weight, under the pain of 40 L. Scots, nor have two stones to ane pundlar, under the like paine.

ACT 40. *Anent Gripping of Lands.*

*Sexto Novembris 1632.*

*Item,* It is statute and ordained by Edward Sinclair of Eftenquoy, and Mr Harry Aitkine, Sherreif-depites of Orkney, with consent of the hail gentlemen suitors of court, and commonty of Orkney, present for the time, that no man gripp his neighbours lands under the paine of 10l. Scots; and fikelike that none gripp his neighbours goods at his own hand, under the paine



paine of 10 libs. Scots, by and attour the restitution of the goods, and the profits thereof.

ACT 41. *Anent Demolishing of Houses.*

*Item,* It is statute and ordained by the Sherreiff-depute, with consent for-said, that no removers from houffes shall demolish the samen, in haill or in pairt, nor take timber doors nor windows furth thereof, although bigged by themselves, under the pain of 20 pounds Scots, the one half to the Sherreiff, and the other to the pairty interest, and that by and attour the reedifying of the houses, under the like paine.

ACT 42. *Anent Corn Yards.*

*Item,* It is statute and ordained, that all men make their corn yeards dykes sufficient, being 7 quarters hight; and no corn menes be made for corns eaten within yeard, except to his neighbours for unmark tuelling.

*Item,* Ratifies the act made anent feeing of servants, and that none receive nor keep another man's servant, and others contained thereintill, under the pains contained in the said act; with this addition, that no man receive ane servant out of another paroch but ane testimonial of the minister or Baillie, under the like paine; and in case servants be found fugative frae their masters, in that case the Baillie of the paroch whereout of he has fled, shall cause him be jogged at the church, upon Sunday, from 8 in the morning till 12 hours at noon; and in case it shall happen such vagabond servants to fie themselves with two masters, and in case it shall happen any servant to fie themselves with a new master, and not to enter home to his service; in that case, the detainer shall pay the fie to them that fied them.



ACT 43. *Anent going on Ship-board.*

*Apud Kirkwam, undecimo die Novembris 1636.*

The which day, in ane head court holden by Mr Hary Aitkine and Thomas Buchannan, Sherreif-deputes of Orkney, with consent of the gentlemen and suitors of court, having great consideratione of the great repaire of ships to the country from England, where the plague daylie increaseth; It was statute and ordained, that no manner of persone or persones shall goe on board of whatsumever ships, barques, or crears, frequenting the coast, or coming within harbours or roads, till tryall be had of their estate, under the paine of 20 L.'s Scots, and closing up of their houses for the space of twenty days; and ordains the same to be published to the Baillies of ilk isle and parochine, that none pretend ignorance.

ACT 44. *Anent Ferrie Fraughts.*

*Item,* It is statute and ordained by the said Sherreif-deputes, with advice and consent forsaide, that the ferrie fraughts over Hightland Firth in time coming, shall be no more than 48 shill. in ane great boat, and 30 shill. in ane small boat; over Water Sound 12d.; over Holme Sound 4 shill.; over Rousay Sound 2 shill.; frae Rousay to Westray 12 shill.; frae that to Egilshay 11 shill.; frae Westray to Ethay 6 shill.; frae that to Sanday 6 shill.; frae Halknesh to Huip 4 shill.; frae Hall oyce to Strynzie 6 shill.; from Rousine to Shappinshay 12 shill.; from Shappinshay to Work 3 shill.; from Kirkwall to Elwick 6 shill.; to Gairfay 6 shill.; to Rendall 6 shill.; to Evie 10 shill.; to Rowfay 12 shill.; to Egilshay 12 shill.; to Rapnesh 40 shill.; to Toukquoy, in ane great boat, 50 shill.; to Spurnesh in Sanday, in a great boat, 50 shill.; in a small, 36 shill.; to Stronsay, in a great boat, 40 shill.; to Ethay 24 shill.; frae Scapay to Walls 24 shill.; to St Margaret's Hope 16 shill.; frae that to Holme, and swa furth thro' the hail ferries;



ries ; and the exacter of any more shall pay the triple worth of the fraughts *toties quoties*.

Curia vice comitatus Orcaden. tenta apud Kirkwam de Yeardis ibidem,  
per honorabilem virum Magistrum Andream Dick, vice comitem  
principalem dicti vice comitatus, sexto die mensis Augusti 1644.  
Et legitime affirmata.

ACT 45. *Conservatione for all the preceding Acts.*

The which day the said Sherreif principall remembring that the certain time of the three yearly head courts not designed by ane act heretofore, albiet it be ordinary custome yearly observed, and considering the well of his Majesties vassalls, who are tyed to give suit and presence at the head courts at the said meetings, be particularly enacted, without alteration or change, upon occasion, or at pleasure of succeeding Sherreifs.

Therefore, it is statute and ordained by the said Sherreif, with consent of the gentlemen and other suitors of court, that the three yearly head courts shall be constantly upon the third Tuesday of January, the second Tuesday of June, and the second Tuesday of November, and that their meetings be butt advertisement in time cumming.

*Item*, Forasmuch as this present court, considering the virtue and power of the generall bygone acts and statutes of this country to be most necessarie and able in themselves to remeid all discords, injuries and wrongs that may arise within the country, and disturb the peaceable government thereof ; yet, considering that the seldom publication there of the samen at the head courts and baillie courts, in the severall Isles and parochines, hath occasioned excuses of pretended ignorance by the transgressors hereof, and that the neglect and sloath in the execution of the saids acts may make them unprofitable to the country, as if the samen had never been made, therefore it is statute and ordained by the said Sherreif, with consent of the gentlemen and suitors of court present for the time, that the saids haill generall acts shall be published and red in a solemn way by the Sherreif-clerk, at every head and current court, yearly, and immediately after the fensing, and that every bailly in ilk



paroch cause quarterly read the same by his clerk, immediately after the fencing of his baillie court, and to this effect : It is ordained, that herewith there be received by every bailly ane authentick double of the said general acts, subscribed by the Sherreif-clerk, and which are hereby ratified in the haill heads, courts, articles and clausfes of the samen.

ACT 46. *Anent the Examination of Rancellors.*

*Item,* That the feaverall rancellors in every paroch, solemnly sworn upon their great oath, and putting their hand upon a Bible, and strickly examined by the Sherreif and his deputs in their current court, next and immediately after the fencing thereof, and of publicatione of the saids acts, anent their declairatioun of all thifts, bloods, royets, witchcrafts, and other transgressions of the saids acts, that shall happen to be committed and known to them frae the court immediately preceding.

ACT 47. *Anent the Tryall of Baillies.*

*Item,* That the paroch, being conveyened in the current court, before the Sherreif and his deputs, be tryed and examined without the presence of their baillies, and in presence of their minister, if neid beis, anent the behaviour and caurage of the baillie in his office, and uplifting of his services and daylie works, that accordingly his just commendatioun in administratioun of justice may be known, without detractione or calumny : In the contrairy, and in case of malversatioun in his place, by injustice, or of oppreffione of the poor, by exactione of unlawful services, such order may be taken therewith, according to the tenor of the feaverall of the saids acts made thereanent.

Act



ACT 48. *Anent the common Gage of Peats.*

*Item*, It is statute and ordained, that all peats bought or sold within the town of Kirkwall shall be manured by ane common gauge of ten foots, always ilk foot containing twelve inches; and this because of severall strifes and debates that fall out into the said town betwix the buyers and sellers thereof.—Extracted *de Libris Actorum Curiae dicti vicecom. per me.*

Thir acts, duely tryed and examined, to be authentick be the Sherreife-clerk, and therefore are judicially recommended to the baillies of ilk Isle and parochine to see the samen to due and lawfull execution, conform to the severall tennors thereof as effeirs, as they will be answerable upon their offices; and that the same be read four times in the year, each quarter court; as also, that they take exact tryall of the lawrightmen quarterly, of all bloods, royets, thefts, witchcrafts, wrack and waith, goods, &c. with the circumstance of time, and witness subscribing, as said is.

*Sic subscribitur,*

JA. GEORGESON.

## APPENDIX, No. XI.

*From the ORCADES of THORMODUS TORFÆUS.*

Vitt er orpit  
fyrir valfalli  
rifs reidi Sky  
rignir blode  
nu er fyrer geirum,

*Late diffunditur  
ante Stragem futuram  
sagittarum nubes;  
depluit sanguis,  
jam hastis amplicatur*



grarr upkominn  
vefr verthiodar  
thær (rectius than) er vinor fylla  
randum vepþi  
Randves bana.

*cineracea  
tela virorum,  
quam amicæ texunt  
rubro subtegmine  
Randveri mortis.*

Sia er orpiun vefr  
yta thaurmum  
oc hardkliadr  
hofthum manna  
ero dreyrrekin  
daurr at skoptum  
iarnvardr ijllir  
en aurum hræladr  
skolum fla sverdum  
figrvef thenna.

*Texitur hæc tela  
intestinis humanis  
flaminique stricte alligantur  
capita humana ;  
sunt sanguine roratæ  
hastæ pro missilibus  
textoria instrumenta ferrea  
ac sagittæ pro radiis ;  
densabimus gladiis  
hanc victoriæ telam.*

Gengr Hilldr vefa  
or Hiorthrimul  
Sangridr Svipul  
sverdum rognum  
Skapt num guesta  
Skiolldr num bresta  
num hialmgagarr  
ihlif koma.

*Prodeunt ad texendum Hilda  
et Hiorthrimula  
Sangrida et Svipula  
cum stricis gladiis ;  
hastile frangetur  
scutum diffendetur  
ensisque  
clypeo illidetur.*

Vindum vindum  
vef Darradar  
sa er ungr Konungur  
atti fyrir  
fram skollum gangæ  
oc i folk vada  
thar er vinir varir  
vapnum skipa.

*Texamus, texamus  
telam Darradi ;  
hunc (gladium) rex juvenis  
prius possidebat  
Prodeamus  
et Cohortes intremus  
Ubi nostri amici  
armis dimicant.*

Vindum



Vindum vindum  
 vef Darradar  
 oc fiklingi  
 fidar fylgiom  
 thar fa bara  
 blodgar randir  
 Guar oc Gundul  
 er gramr hlifdu.

Vindum vindum  
 vef Darradar  
 thar er ve vadæ  
 vigra manna  
 latum eigi  
 lif hans faraz  
 eign valkyrior  
 vigs um kosti.

Their muno lyder  
 londum rada  
 er utskaga  
 adr um bygdn  
 qued ec ricum gram  
 radiun danda  
 nu er fyrir oddum  
 jarlmadr huigiun.

Oc muno Irar  
 augr um bitha  
 that er alldri mun  
 ytum fyrnaz  
 nu er vefr ofiun  
 enn vollr rothiun

*Texamus texamus  
 telam Darradi  
 et regi deinde  
 deinde adhareamus ;  
 ibi videbant  
 sanguine rorata scuta  
 Gunna et Gundula  
 quæ regem tutabantur.*

*Texamus texamus  
 telam Darradi  
 ubi arma concrepant  
 bellacium virorum ;  
 non sinamus eum  
 vita privari  
 habent Valkyriæ  
 cædis potestatem.*

*Illi populi  
 terras regent,  
 qui deserta promontoria  
 antea incolebant ;  
 dico potenti regi  
 mortem imminere ;  
 jam sagittis  
 occubuit comes.*

*Et Hiberniæ  
 dolor accidet  
 qui nunquam  
 apud viros delebitur ;  
 jam tela texta est ;  
 campus vero (sanguine) roratus*

numu



numu um londfara  
læspioll gota.

*terras percurrent  
conflictus militum.*

Nu er ogorligt  
um at litaz  
at dreyrugt sky  
aregr med himne  
mun lopt litad  
lyda blode  
athr sparvarar  
springa allar.

*Nunc horrendum est  
circumspicere  
cum sanguinea nubes  
per æra volitet;  
tingetur aer  
Sanguine virorum  
antequam vaticinia nostra  
omnia corruant.*

Vel quedu ver  
um Konung ungan  
figrhlioda fiold  
syngium heilar  
enn hiun nemi  
er heyrer a  
geirliotha fiold  
oc gumum segi.

*Bene canimus  
de rege juvene;  
victoriæ Carmina multa  
bene sint nobis canentibus;  
Discat autem ille  
qui auscultat  
bellica carmina multa  
et viris referat.*

Ridum heftum  
allz ut herum  
brugdium sverdum  
a brott hedan.

*Equitemus in equis  
quoniam efferimus  
strictos gladios  
ex hoc loco.*

'The above is translated by Grey, in his Ode, entitled, ' The Fatal  
' Sisters.'



---

*The LORD's PRAYER, in NORN or NORSE, as Spoken formerly by the Natives of ORKNEY, from Dr PERCY's Preface to MALLETT's Northern Antiquities.*

Favor i ir i Chimrie. 1. Helleur (Helleut) ir i Nam thite. 2. Gilla cofdum thite cumma. 3. Veya thine mota var gort o Yurn finna gort i Chimrie. 4. Gav vus da on da dalight Brow vora. 5. Firgive vus finna vora fin vee firgive findara mutha vus. 6. Lyv vus ye i Tumtation. 7. Min delivera vus fro Olt ilt. Amen.

---

*The LORD's PRAYER, in NORSE, as Spoken by some People in FULA, one of the Shetland Isles, from Mr Low's Tour, MS. 1774.*

Fy vor o er i Chimeri. Halagt vara nam det. La konungdum din cumma. La vill din vera guerde i vrildin findacri Chimeri. Gav vus dagh u dagloght brau. Forgive findorwafa fin vi forgiva gem ao finda gainst wus. Lia wus ski o vera tempa, but delivra wus fro adlu idlu, for do i ir konungdum, u puri, u glori. Amen.



*Some WORDS of the same Language Translated into ENGLISH  
from the same MS.*

|                      |                            |
|----------------------|----------------------------|
| Foula,               | <i>Fugla or Uttric.</i>    |
| An island,           | <i>Hion.</i>               |
| Bread,               | <i>Couft.</i>              |
| Oat bread,           | <i>Corka couft.</i>        |
| Barley bread,        | <i>Boga couft.</i>         |
| The fea,             | <i>Sheng.</i>              |
| A fifh,              | <i>Fifk.</i>               |
| A haddock,           | <i>Hoifsan.</i>            |
| A cod,               | <i>Grongi, grodningar.</i> |
| A ling,              | <i>Longo.</i>              |
| A herring,           | <i>Sildin.</i>             |
| A rock,              | <i>Berg, berrie.</i>       |
| A boat,              | <i>Bodin, knorin.</i>      |
| A fail,              | <i>Seigle.</i>             |
| A maft,              | <i>Moftin.</i>             |
| A coat,              | <i>Quot.</i>               |
| A fhoe,              | <i>Scugin.</i>             |
| A ftocking,          | <i>Sockin.</i>             |
| A cap,               | <i>Ugan.</i>               |
| Sea mall or mew,     | <i>Whit fuglin.</i>        |
| The eagle,           | <i>Ednin.</i>              |
| A trencher or plate, | <i>Bergefken.</i>          |
| A fpoon,             | <i>Sponin.</i>             |
| A ladle,             | <i>Heofa.</i>              |
| A horfe,             | <i>Heffin.</i>             |



|          |                      |
|----------|----------------------|
| A mare,  | <i>Russa.</i>        |
| A cow,   | <i>Kurin.</i>        |
| A sheep, | <i>Fie, sedvite.</i> |
| A ewe,   | <i>Oron.</i>         |
| A pot,   | <i>Posney.</i>       |

*A BALLAD, in the same Language, taken from the Mouth of an Old Man in the same Island, during the same Tour, the subject of which is a contest between a King of NORWAY and an Earl of ORKNEY, who had married the King's Daughter, in her Father's absence, and without his consent.—MS. penes me.*

## 1.

Da vara Jarlin d'Orkneyar  
 For frinda fin spir de ro  
 Whirdi an skilde menn  
 Our glas buryon burtaga.

## 2.

Or vanna ro eidnar fuo  
 Tega du menu our glas buryon  
 Kere friende min yamna men  
 Eso vrilddan stiendi gede min vara to din.

## 3.

Yom keimir cullingin  
 Fro fiene burt  
 Afta Vaar hon fruen Heldina  
 Hemi stu mer stien.



## 4.

Whar an yaar elouden  
 Ita kan oadnaft wo  
 Au Scal vara Keinde  
 Wo ofta thre fin reithin ridna dar fro

## 5.

Kemi to Orkneyar Jarlin  
 Vilda mien fante Maunis  
 I Orknian u bian fian  
 I lian far diar.

## 6.

An give Drotnign kedn puster  
 On de kin firfane furie  
 Tworere wo eder  
 Whitrane kidn.

## 7.

In kimirin Jarlin  
 U klapaffe Hildina  
 On de kidn quirto  
 Vult doch, fiegan vara moch or fly din.

## 8.

Elde vilda fiegan vara  
 Fy min u alt fin  
 Ans namnu wo  
 So minyach u ere min heru Orkneyar linge ro.

## 9.

Nu di skall taga dor yochwo  
 And u ria dor to strandane nir



U yilfa fy minu avon  
Blit an ear ni cumi e dora band.

## 10.

Nu Swaran Konign  
So mege gak honon i muthi  
Whath ear di ho gane mier  
I dante buthe.

## 11.

Trette mirke vath ru godle  
Da Skall yaek ger yo  
U all de vara sonna lifs  
So linge fiu yach liva mo.

## 12.

Nu linge flug an konign  
U linge wo an Swo  
Wordig vaar dogh mugi soni  
Yacha skier fare moga so minde yach angan u  
friend roft wath comman mier to landa \*.

## 13.

Nu Swara Hiluge  
Hera geve honon scam  
Taga di gild firre Hidina  
Sin yach skall lega dor fram.

## 14.

Eftin whaar u feur fetign  
Agonga kadu i fluge

\* This verse seems to be part of an intermediate stanza, perhaps to be placed between these marked 12 and 13.



Feur fetign fin gonga  
Kadu i pluge.

15.

Nu stienderin Jarlin  
U linge wo and wo  
Dese mo eke Orknear  
So Linge san yach lava mo.

16.

Nu eke tegaran san  
Sot Koningn fyrin din  
U alt yach an Hilhugin  
Widu ugare din arar.

17.

Nu swarar an franna Hildina  
U dem san idne i fro  
Di flo dor a bardagana  
Dar comme ov sen mo

18.

Nu Jarlin an genger  
I vadlin fram  
U kadnar fina mien  
Geven fkeger i Orkneyan

19.

Han u cummin  
In u vod lerdin  
Frinde fans lever  
Vel burne mun



20.

Nu fruna Hildina  
 On genger i vadlin fram  
 Fy di yera da ov man dum  
 Dora di spidlaiki mire man.

21.

Nu fware an Hilluge  
 Crego gevan a scam  
 Gayer an Jarlin frinde  
 Din an u fadlin in.

22.

Nu fac an Jarlin dahuge  
 Dar min de an engin gro  
 An east ans huge vi  
 Fong ednar u vaxhedne mere nio.

23.

Di lava onir gugna  
 Yift bal yagh fur o landi  
 Gipt mir nu fruan Hildina  
 Vath godle u fasta bande

24.

Nu bill on heve da yalt  
 Guadni bori u da kadu  
 Sina kloyn a bera do fkall  
 Fon fruna Hildina verka wo sine chelsina villya.

25.

Hildina liger wo chaldon:  
 U o dukrar u grothe

Onin



Onin du luga till bridlevfin  
Bonlother u duka dogha.

26.

Nu Hildina on askar feyrin  
Sien di gava mier livi  
Ow skinka vin,  
Ou guida vin.

27.

Duska skinka vin, u guida vin  
Tinka dogh eke wo  
Jarlin an gongha here din.

28.

Watha skilde tinka  
Wo Jarlin gonga here min.  
Hien minde yagh inga forlokona  
Bera fare kera fyryn min.

29.

Da gerde on fruna Hildina  
On bar vo mien et  
On Soverin fent, fyfin  
Fyfin u quarfin sat.

30.

Da girde un fruna Hildina  
On bard im ur  
Hadlin burt fein on laghdi  
Glong i otsta jatha port.



31.

Nu iki vifti an Hiluge  
 Itne ov till do  
 Eldin var commin i lut  
 Uftor u filki fark ans omo.

32.

Nu leveren fram  
 Hiluge du kereda  
 Fraun Hildina du  
 Givemir live u gre.

33.

So mege u ganga gre  
 Skall dogh fwo  
 Skall lathi min heran  
 I bardagana fwo.

34.

Du tuckftada lide undocht yach  
 Swo et fa ans bugin blio  
 Dogh casta ans huge  
 I mit fung u vexemir mire meo.

35.

Nu tachtu on heve fwelko  
 Ans bo vad mild u ftien  
 Dogh skall alde mire Koningufons  
 Vadue vilda mien."



## APPENDIX, No. XII.

RESPITE *in favour of* EDWARD SINCLARE *and others, for the Slaughter of the* EARL OF CATHNESS. *From the Original Parchment.*

JAMES, be the grace of God King of Scottis. To all & Sundry our justices, wardenis, lieutenants, justice clerks, shreffs, stewartis, crounaris, yare deputis, provestis, auldermane, and baillies of burrowis, and all oyeris our officiaris py<sup>t</sup> and to cum, and yare deputis, liegis, subditis, quham it efferis, quhaire knowlege yir our letteris fall cum, greting.

Wit ze we, of oure speciale grace, to have respitt, supersedeit, and delayit, and be yir o' le<sup>t</sup>eris in ye law spealie respittis, supersedes, and delayis, Edward Sinclare of Strome, Magnus Sinclare of Werfettir, Johnne Sinclare of Follap, William Sinclare of House, Olive Sinclare of Hilwra, Magnus Sinclare, Lawrence Sinclare, James Sinclare, James Cragy of Brogh, Johnne Rendale, Adam Sclatter, Johnne Burnefs, Johnne Cromarte, Magnus Cromarte, Robert Hercas, Johnne Hercas, George Hercas, William Perifone, Johnne Jamezon, William Kardy, Gilbert Cragy, Williame Zorstone, Walter Forester, Chrifte Jane, Magnus Midhouse, Johnne Loutit, Johnne Paplaye, Magnus Gariacht, Williame Cragy, John Cragy of Banks, & Edward Birstane, and generally all and sundry uyeris persones, kynismen, fryndis, assistaris, adherentis, partakoures & complices w<sup>t</sup> ye said Edward & persones above written, dwelland w'in ye ylis of Orknay & Zetland, being with them in company at the committing of any cryms and arts, & part w<sup>t</sup> thame yrintill in ony tyme bygane before ye day of ye date of yir py<sup>tis</sup> ffor art & part of the convocation & gadering of our lieges in arrayit battel agains umq<sup>n</sup> Johnne Erle of Cathness, & for art & part of ye slaughter of the said

umqu



umq<sup>n</sup> Erle and his friendis and partakours being with yame in company at that tyme, and for all uyeris slaughteris, mutilations, oppreffiouns, reiffis, fortho<sup>t</sup> felonies, treffonis, crymes, transgreffiouns & offensis quhatsumever committit & done by yame, or any of yame, or in any uyir part or place w<sup>i</sup>n o<sup>r</sup> realm, in ony tymes bygane, before ye day of ye dait hereof, trea-  
foun in o<sup>r</sup> owne proper persone allenarlie exceptit, for ye space of 19 zeres next to cum eftir ye date of yir py<sup>n</sup>is, to indure but any revocatioun, ob-  
stakle, impediment, or againcalling quhatsumever. Attour we will, grantis, and ordains, yat yis oure speale respitt, superfedere, and delay, fall be of als grate strenth, avale, force & effect to ye perstones yatt are not namyt and comprehendit in the famen, being w<sup>t</sup> ye said Edward and his complices at ye committing of ye saidis cryms, & art & part w<sup>t</sup> yame yrintill, as and yare names and furnames were spealie and particularly in<sup>n</sup>yt thereintill. Quharefore we charge you straitlie, and commandis zou all and fundry our justices, wardanis, lieutenants, justice clerks, shreffis, stewartis, crounaris, provestis, auldermene and baillies of burrowis, and all uyris our officiars pyn<sup>t</sup> and to cum, and z<sup>or</sup> deputis, liegis and subditis forsaidis, yat nane of zou tak upon hand to call jornay, attacke, arrest, accuse, molest, truble, follow & persew ye saidis perstones, yare kyninsmen, freyndis, affistaris, adhe-  
rentis, partakaris & complices, or any of yame w<sup>i</sup>n ye saidis boundis, for ye saidis crymes bygane, or to do or attempt ony thing incontrar violation or breking of yis our speale respitt, superfedere and delay, in ony wise, during all ye tyme and space above written, under all the hieast pane and charge yat aftir may follow. Discharging you, and ilk ane of you of z<sup>or</sup> offices in yat part, in ye meyntyme, be yir oure leeris, given under oure Privie Sele, at Striveling, ye nineteen day of September, and of oure reigne ye  
zeres

Per signaturam manu S. D. N.  
Regis Subscriptam.



Upon the label to which the seal (which is broken off) had been affixed, thus inscribed: 'Respectuatio Edwardi Sinclere de Strome et triginta aliorum.'

Marked thus on the back:

'Ane nynteen zeris respitt to Edward Sincler and his complices, for ye slaughter of the Erle of Cathness, &c.'



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